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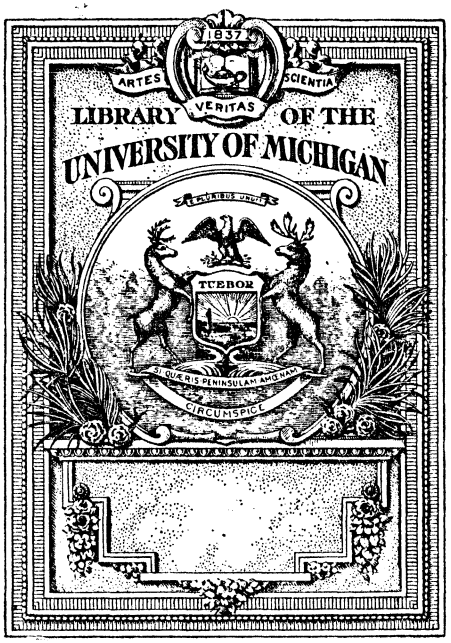
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THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE



AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LIII
DECEMBER 1920 TO MAY 1921

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED
LONDON AND MELBOURNE
1921

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The Christmas WINDSOR



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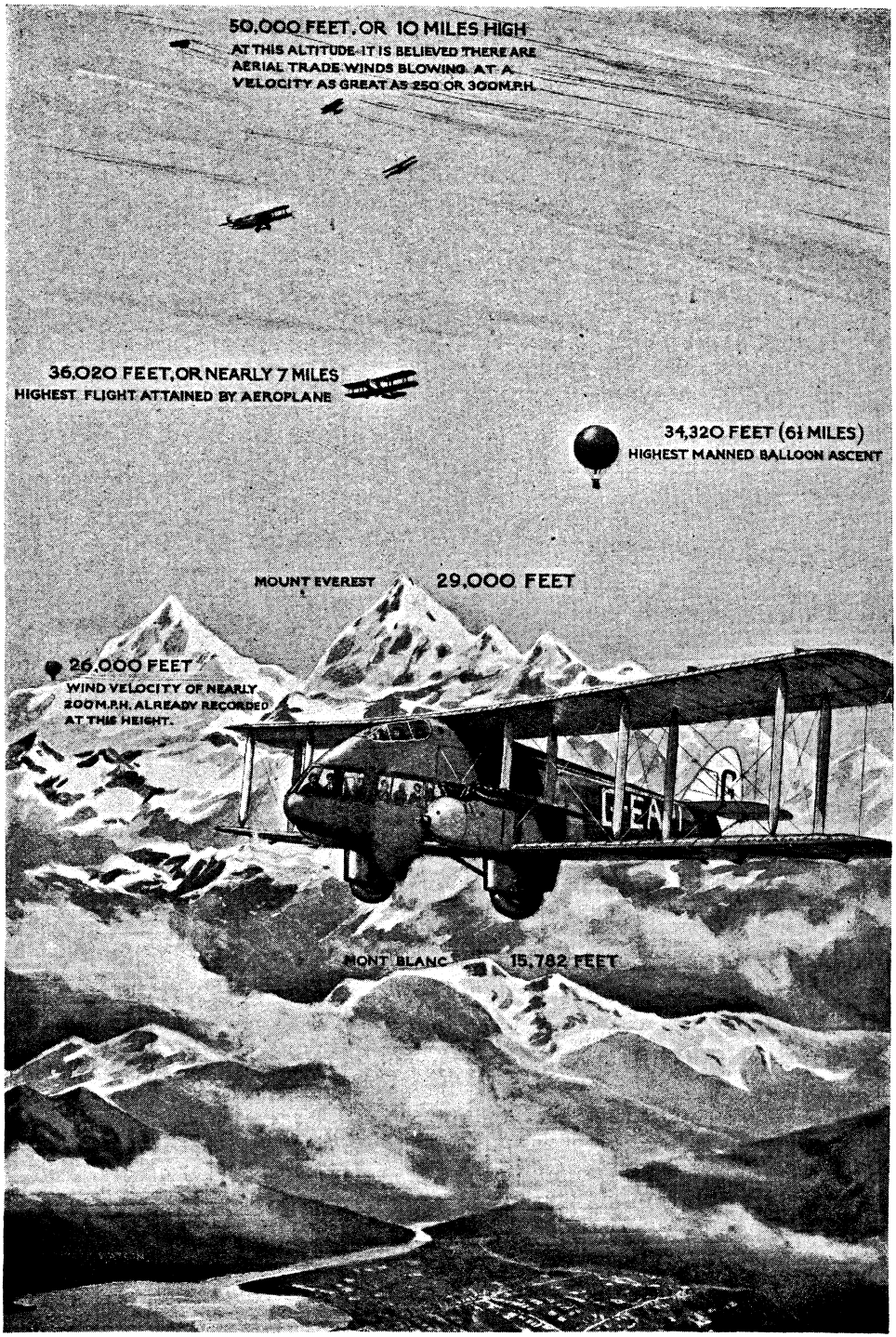
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THE GREAT AERIAL TRADE-WINDS. BY GEOFFREY WATSON.

This picture illustrates the theory, which science is now investigating, that at such immense altitudes as 50 000 feet, or ten miles above the surface of the earth, there are huge trends of wind, blowing at velocities vastly greater than those at earth level, into which it may be possible for the pilots of aircraft to manœuvre their machines, and so add many miles an hour to their speed when on long trans-ocean or Continental flights. *See article "The World's Airways," on page 45.*



"In and out among the booths and swings and merry-go-rounds we hastened, whistling, calling, and inquiring in vain. Nobby was lost."

A DOUBLE EVENT

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne" and "The Courts of Idleness."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"LISTEN to this," said Berry.

"*SIR,—Shortly before six o'clock this evening an extremely valuable Chow, by name Blue Bandala, which I purchased last March for no less a sum than six hundred pounds, was brutally attacked in Bilberry village by a rough-haired mongrel, which was accompanying two girls. I am given to understand that this animal belongs to you. I was at first determined to issue a summons, but I have now decided to give you a chance before doing so. If it amuses you to keep such a cur about your house, there is nothing to prevent you from so doing. But you must understand that once it leaves your property it must be under proper and effective control, and if it ever attacks a dog of mine again, I shall either destroy it upon the spot or apply to the Bench for its destruction. I may say that Blue Bandala is not only very well bred, but a very quiet and friendly dog, and was in no way to blame for what occurred.*

HERBERT BASON.

B. PLEYDELL, White Ladies."

The explosion which the reading of this letter provoked is indescribable.

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"It's a lie!" cried Jill in a choking voice. "It's a beastly lie. His dog started it. Nobby would never have touched him. He wasn't paying any attention. The Chow came up from behind and just fell upon him. And how dare he say he's a mongrel? It's just one lie after another, isn't it, Adèle?"

"It's outrageous," said Miss Feste. "Directly I saw the other dog, I thought he meant mischief, but before I could tell Jill, he'd started in. Nobby didn't even know he was there."

The door opened, and dinner was announced.

"Falcon," said Berry.

"Sir," said the butler.

"Who brought this note?"

"It was a chauffeur, sir. I don't know 'im by sight, sir."

We filed out of the library, smouldering with resentment.

"But what an awful man he must be," said Daphne. "Even if our dog had been in the wrong, that's no reason for writing a letter like that."

"It's unpardonable," said I. "It's quite bad enough to have him living in the neighbourhood, but if this is the way he's going to behave. . . ." I turned to Adèle. "Was his manner very bad at the time?"

"He seemed more rattled than anything else. He was clearly afraid to interfere. Jill and I got them apart, as I told you. He got very red in the face, but beyond muttering with his teeth clenched, he never said a word."

"Must have gone straight home and got it off his chest," said Jonah. "I expect he's awfully proud of that letter, if the truth were known."

"Well, don't let's dwell on it," said Berry, regarding the oysters which had been set before him. "After dinner will do. You hardly ever go down with typhoid within six hours." He turned to Adèle. "Bet you I've got more strepsicocci than you have," he added pleasantly.

"Shut up," said Daphne. "Adèle dear, d'you like oysters? Because, don't you eat them if you don't."

"No, don't," said Berry. "If you don't, whatever you do, don't. And whatever you don't, I will."

Adèle looked at him with a mischievous smile.

"I couldn't bear," she said, "to have your blood on my head."

Then she glanced gratefully at Daphne and picked up a fork.

Mr. Herbert Bason had arisen out of the cloud of War. The time had produced the man. The storm had burst just in the nick of time to save the drooping theatrical interests which he controlled, and the fruit which these had borne steadily for the best part of five long years had been truly phenomenal. A patriot to the backbone, the bewildered proprietor obtained absolute exemption from the Tribunal, turned the first six rows of all his pits into stalls, and bought War Loan with both hands. It was after the second air-raid upon London that he decided to take a house in the country. . . . Less than a year ago he had disposed of his music-halls and had settled near Bilberry for good.

"By the way," said Daphne, "did I tell you? The laundry's struck."

"Thank you," said her husband, "for that phrase."

"Don't mention it," said my sister. "But I thought you'd like to know. Heaven knows when they'll go back, so I should go easy with your stiff collars and shirts."

"What, have the saws stopped working?" said Berry. "I can't bear it."

"What about my trousers?" said I. "I've only one clean pair left."

Daphne shrugged her white shoulders.

"What about my tablecloths?" she replied.

Berry addressed himself to Adèle.

"We live in pleasant times, do not we? Almost a golden age. I wonder what the trouble is now. Probably some absent-minded *blanchisseuse* has gone and ironed twenty socks in ten minutes instead of ten socks in twenty minutes, without thinking. And the management refuse to sack her for this grievous lapse into the slough of pre-War industry, out of which a provident Trade Union has blackmailed her to climb."

"I've no doubt you're right," said I. "The question is, where are we going to end? It's the same everywhere. And the mere thought of Income Tax sends my temperature up."

"Ah," said Berry. "I had a quiet hour with the Book of the Words, issued by that Fun Palace, Somerset House, this afternoon. 'Income Tax, and How to Pay it.' Commonly styled, with unconscious humour, The Income Tax Return. By the time I was through, I had made out that, if I render a statement according to the printed instructions, my tax will exceed my income by one hundred and forty-four pounds. If, on the other hand, I make an incorrect

return, I shall be fined fifty pounds and treble the tax payable. You really don't get a look in."

"If you say much more," groaned Jonah, "you'll spoil my appetite. When I reflect that in 1913 and a burst of piety I sent the Chancellor of the Exchequer a postal order for eight and sixpence by way of Conscience Money, I feel positively sick."

"Not piety," corrected my brother-in-law. "Drink. I remember you had some very bad goes about then."

"What a terrible memory you have!" said Adèle. "I feel quite uneasy."

"Fear not, sweet one," was the reply. "Before I retail your indiscretions, I shall send you a list of them, with the price of omission clearly marked against each in red ink. The writing will be all blurred with my tears." Here Adèle declined a second vegetable. "There, now. I've gone and frightened you. And marrow's wonderful for the spine. Affords instant relief. And you needn't eat the seeds. Spit them over your left shoulder. That'll bring you luck."

There was an outraged clamour of feminine protest.

"I won't have it," said Daphne. "Disgusting brute!"

"And that," said Jonah, "is the sodden mountebank who dares to cast a stone into the limpid pool of my character. That is the overfed sluggard——"

"Take this down, somebody," said Berry. "The words'll scorch up the paper, but never mind. Record the blasphemy. Capital 'M' for 'mountebank.' 'Sluggard' with an 'H.' And I'm not overfed."

"You're getting fatter every day," said Jill, gurgling.

"That's right," said my brother-in-law. "Bay the old lion. And bring down these grey hairs in——"

"Talking of mountebanks," said I, "who's going to Fallow Hill Fair?"

"Adèle ought to see it," said Daphne. "Why don't you run her over in the car?"

"I will, if she'd like to go. It's a real bit of old England."

"I agree," said Berry. "What with the cocoanut shies and the steam roundabouts, you'd think you were back in the Middle Ages. I think I'll come, too."

"Then you go alone," said I. "I don't forget the last time you went."

"What happened?" said Adèle, her eyes lighted with expectation.

Berry sighed.

"It was most unfortunate," he said. "You see, it was like this. B-behind a b-barrier there was a b-booth with a lot of b-bottles, at which you were b-bothered to throw b-balls. If you b-broke three b-bottles——"

"This nervous alliteration," interposed Adèle, "is more than I can b-bear."

"—you received a guerdon which you were encouraged to select from a revolting collection of bric-à-brac which was displayed in all its glory upon an adjacent stall. Laden with munitions, I advanced to the rails. . . . Unhappily, in the excitement of the moment, I mistook my objective. . .. It was a most natural error. Both were arranged in tiers, both were pleading for destruction."

"Nonsense," said Daphne. "You did it on purpose. You know you did. I never saw anything more deliberate in all my life."

"Not at all," replied her husband. "I was confused. A large and critical crowd had collected to watch my prowess, and I was pardonably nervous."

"But what happened?" said Adèle.

"Well," said I, "naturally nobody was expecting such a move, with the result that the brute got off about six balls before they could stop him. The execution among the prizes was too awful. You see, they were only about six feet away. The owner excepted, the assembled populace thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen."

"Yes," chimed in Jill. "And then he turned round and asked the man how many bottles he'd won."

"I never was so ashamed," said Daphne. "Of course, the poor man was nearly off his head."

"And I paid for the damage," said Jonah.

I looked across at Adèle.

"So, if he comes with us," I said, "you know what to expect."

My lady threw back her head and laughed.

"I suppose you're to be trusted," she said.

"Once past the pub," said Berry, "he'll be all right. But if he says he feels faint outside the saloon-bar, don't argue with him, but come straight home."

"At any rate," said Adèle, "I shall have Nobby."

The reference brought us back to Mr. Bason with a rush.

In spite of our resolution to eschew the subject, that gentleman's letter was heatedly discussed for the remainder of dinner.

To-day was the third of September, and



"'Send up and see if Miss Feste will breakfast upstairs, Falcon. I think——'"

on the eleventh a dog show was to be held at Brooch. I had not entered Nobby, because I felt that his exhibition would probably cause us more trouble than the proceeding was worth. It now occurred to us that Mr. Bason would almost certainly enter—had probably long ago entered his precious Chow. Any local triumph, however petty and easy for a man of means to procure, would be sure to appeal to one of his calibre, and the chance, which the show would afford, of encountering, if not accosting, one or two County people would be greatly to his relish. Supposing we did enter Nobby. . . .

The idea of beating Mr. Bason in the race for first prize with the "rough-haired mongrel" which "it amused us to keep about our house" was most appealing.

As soon as dinner was over, Berry rang up the Secretary.

Our surmise was correct. Blue Bandala was entered.

"Well, am I too late to enter a Sealyham?"

"Not if you do it to-morrow," came the reply.



"'Miss Feste has breakfasted, madam.' 'Already?' 'Yes madam. Her breakfast was taken to her before eight o'clock.'"

"You shall have the particulars before mid-day."

"Right-oh."

Berry replaced the receiver.

"Little Herbert will take the first prize for Chows," he said. "That can't be helped.

But he's entered his dog for the 'All Comers,' and that's our chance. If we can't lift that goblet from under his ugly nose, I'll never smile again."

"What exactly's 'All Comers'?" said Jill.

"The best all-round specimen of any breed. Manners, carriage—everything's taken into consideration."

"If personality counts," said Jonah, "Nobby'll romp home."

I regarded our unconscious representative with an appraising eye. Supine upon the sofa, with his head out of sight behind Adèle, there was little to recommend him as a model of deportment. With a sigh I resumed the composition of a reply to Mr. Bason's remarkable letter.

When I had finished the draft, I gave it to Berry. The latter read it through, nodding solemn approval. Then he repaired to the writing-table and copied my sentences, word for word, on to a sheet of notepaper.

As he laid down his pen, he rose to his feet.

"I'll tell you what," he said. "If the blighter replies, and Nobby comes off at the show, we'll send this correspondence to the local Press."

"Let's have it," said Jonah.

Berry handed me the letter, and I read it aloud.

Sir,

I have received your note.

As an alloy of misrepresentation of fact, arrogant bluster and idle menaces, I doubt whether it has ever been equalled upon this side of the Rhine.

Indeed, its legibility would appear to be its only merit.

Not that I care for your style of handwriting, but in these degenerate days it is, you will agree, a relief to receive a letter which can be easily read.

You did go a bust on Blue Banana, didn't you?

Pray act upon your first impulse and apply for a summons. The Bench will not grant your application, but—again you will agree—it is the effort, and not the result, which counts.

It is nice of you to inquire after my Sealyham. He is none the worse, thanks, and I fancy he made old Blue Banana sit up.

Yours faithfully,
Berry Pleydell.

H. Bason, Esq.

P.S.—You must forgive me for addressing you as "Esquire," but it is difficult to break a foolish habit of courtesy which I formed as a child. *B. P.*

* * * * *

"Fifteen thirty," cried Adèle, making ready to serve. "Hullo!" She pointed with her racket over my shoulder. "Nobby's gone lame."

I swung on my heel to see the terrier limping apologetically towards me, and going dead lame upon the near fore.

As he came up, I dropped my racket and fell upon one knee, the better to search for the cause of the trouble. Carefully I handled the affected limb. . . . My fingers came to his toes, and the Sealyham winced. With a sigh of relief, I laid him upon his back.

"Got it?" said Adèle.

I looked up into the beautiful face three inches from mine.

"I fancy so." I bent to peer at the small firm foot. "Yes. Here we are. He's picked up a puncture."

The next moment I plucked a substantial thorn from between two strong black toes. A warm red tongue touched my restraining fingers in obvious gratitude.

"Will he be all right?"—anxiously.

"He shall speak for himself," said I, releasing my patient.

With a galvanic squirm the latter regained his feet, spun into the air, gyrated till I felt dizzy, and then streaked round the tennis-lawn, his hind feet comically overreaching his fore, steering a zigzag course with such inconsequence as suggested that My Lord of Misrule himself was directing him by wireless.

It was not worth while finishing our interrupted game, so we strolled back to the house. At the top of the stairs we parted, to go and change. Directly after lunch we were to leave for the fair.

Six days had elapsed since Nobby's scuffle with the apple of Mr. Bason's eye. Life had slipped by uneventfully. The Sealyham had been put upon a strict diet and was thoroughly groomed three times a day: my store of clean starched linen had dwindled to one shirt and two collars, which, distrusting my brother-in-law, I kept under lock and key: and Mr. Bason had been stung by our letter into sending a reply which afforded us the maximum of gratification. It ran as follows:—

Sir,

Your insulting letter to hand.

I stand by every word of my previous letter.

The sooner, therefore, that you realise that I am not to be trifled with, the better for all concerned.

You are evidently one of those people who believe that impudent bluff will carry them anywhere, and that, with your birth and upbringing behind you, you can do as you please. But you are wrong. Among men who are men, as distinct from pedantic popinjays, you go for nothing. Pshaw.

Herbert Bason.

B. Pleydell, Esq.

P.S.—Be good enough to note that my dog's name is "Blue Bandala," not "Blue Banana."

H. B.

Our reply was dispatched within twenty-four hours.

Sir,

Many thanks for your masterly appreciation of my character.

We all think "pedantic popinjays" simply splendid. Is it your own?

Don't tell old Banana Skin, but I've had the nerve to enter my Sealyham for the "All Comers" event at Brooch.

So glad you're not to be trifled with. Selah.

Yours faithfully,

Berry Pleydell.

H. Bason, Esq.

In two days' time we should meet at Philippi.

It must be confessed that there were moments when we remembered our precipitancy in some uneasiness. Nobby was well bred, but he had not cost six hundred pounds. Always he looked his best, and his best was extremely good. His many excellent points were set off by a most attractive air and a singular charm and sprightliness of manner. Every movement and pose was full of grace, and he had the brightest eyes that I have ever seen. But Blue Bandala was clearly a "show" animal. Could our little David beat this very Goliath among dogs, and that upon the latter's own ground? Could our little amateur take on a plus-four professional and beat him at his own game? There was no manner of doubt that angels would at least have walked delicately where we had rushed in. However, it was too late now. Even if we would, we could not draw back. Beyond doing what we could to keep him as fit as a fiddle, there was nothing to be done.

After a bath, I put on a tweed suit, concealed my discarded and sole surviving pair of white trousers from the rapacious eye of a random housemaid, and descended to lunch.

An hour later Adèle and Nobby and I were all in the Rolls, sailing along the soft brown roads *en route* for Fallow Hill.

It was a day of great loveliness, and the forest ways were one and all beset with a rare glory.

Thirty-six hours before, the first frost of autumn had touched the breast of Earth with silver finger-tips. 'Twas but a runaway knock. The mischief-loving knave was gone again, before the bustling dame had braced herself to open to her pert visitor. Maybe the rogue was beating up his quarters. The time of his dreaded lodgment was not yet. His apprehensive hostess was full of smiles. Summer was staying on. . . .

Yet on the livery of the countryside the accolade of Frost had wrought a wonder. Two days ago the world was green. To-day a million leaves glanced, green as before, yet with a new-found lustre—something of red in it, something of gold, something of sober brown. But the wonder was not to the trees. It was the humble bracken that had been dubbed knight. The homespun of the forest was become cloth of pure gold, glittering, flawless. In the twinkling of an eye the change had come. Here was an acre spread with the delicate fronds, and there a ragged mile, and yonder but shreds and patches—yet all of magic gold, flinging the sunlight back, lighting the shadows, making the humblest ride too rich for kings to trample, till the green roofs and walls looked dull beside it, and the ephemeral magnificence took Memory by the throat and wrung a lease of life from that Reversioner.

"Tell me," I said, "of Mr. Bason. He interests me, and I've never seen him."

"Mr. Bason," said Adèle, "is short and fat and—yes, I'm afraid he's greasy. He has bright yellow hair and a ridiculous moustache, which is brushed up on end on each side of his nostrils. He has very watery pale blue eyes, and all the blood in his face seems to have gone to his nose."

"Muscular rheumatism," I suggested.

"I guess so. Of course, he knows best, and I don't pretend to say what men should wear, but white flannel suits aren't becoming to every figure, are they? Most of the rest of him was mauve—shirt, socks, and handkerchief. Oh, and he had a tie on his pin."

"But how lovely!"

"Yes, but you should have smelt the lilac. He was just perfumed to death. If

he isn't careful, one of these days he'll get picked."

"One of the old school, in fact. Well, well. . . ." We swept round a corner, and I nodded ahead. "See that ridge in front of us? Well, that's Fallow Hill. The village lies close, just on the other side."

"What are you going to do with the car?" said Adèle.

"They'll let me lock her up—don't be shocked—at the brewery. I know them there."

"You'll admit it sounds bad."

"Yes, but it smells lovely. You wait. For that reason alone, I should vote against Prohibition. The honest scent of brewing, stealing across the meadows on a summer eve, is one of the most inspiring things I know."

"But what a man!" said Adèle. "'Books in the running brooks, *Virtue in vats*, and good in everything.' Nobby," she added reproachfully, "why didn't you tell me he was a poet?" The Sealyham put his head on one side, as if desiring her to repeat the question. "Oh, you cute thing!" And, with that, my lady bent and kissed the terrier between the bright brown eyes.

I put the wheel over hard, and the car swerved violently.

"For Heaven's sake!" cried Miss Feste. "What are you doing?"

"It's your fault," said I. "I'm only human. Besides, he doesn't deserve it."

Adèle flung me a dazzling smile, made as though she would say something, and then, apparently changing her mind, relapsed into a provoking silence. . . .

A quarter of an hour later the Rolls had been safely bestowed at the brewery, and my companion and I were making our way amusedly past booths and tents and caravans, where chapmen, hucksters, drovers, cheapjacks, gipsies and bawling showmen wrangled and chaffered and cried their wares or entertainments, making with the crude music of the merry-go-rounds much the same good-humoured uproar which had been faithfully rendered at the village of Fallow Hill every September for the last five hundred years.



"'And here I plight thee my troth.'"

" Blessings on your sweet pretty face, my lady ! " cried an old voice.

We turned to see a very old gipsy, seated a little apart upon a backless chair, nodding and smiling in our direction.

Adèle inclined her head, and I slid a hand into my pocket.

" Come hither to me, my lady," piped the old dame, " and let your man cross my old palm with silver, and I'll tell you your fortune. Ah, but you have a happy face."

Adèle looked at me, and I nodded.

" They're a good folk," I said, " and you'll get better stuff for your money than you would in Bond Street. But don't, if you don't want to."

My words could not have been heard by the gipsy. Yet, before Adèle could reply—

" Aye," she said, " the pretty gentleman's right. We're a good folk, and there be some among us can see farther than the dwellers in towns." Adèle started, and the crone laughed. " Come hither, my lady, and let me look in your eyes."

She was an old, old woman, but the snow-white hair that thrust from beneath her kerchief was not thin : her face was shrunken and wrinkled, yet apple-cheeked : and her great sloe-black eyes glowed with a strange brilliance, as if there were fires kindled deep in the wasted sockets.

Adèle stepped forward, when, to my amazement, the gipsy put up her hands and groped for the girl's shoulders. The significance of the gesture was plain. She was stone blind.

For a while she mumbled, and, since I had not gone close, I did not hear what she said. But Adèle was smiling, and I saw the colour come flooding into her cheeks. . . .

Then the old dame lifted up her voice and called to me to come also.

I went to her side.

An old gnarled hand fumbled its way on to my arm.

" Aye," she piped. " Aye. 'Tis as I thought. Your man also must lose ere he find. Together ye shall lose, and together gain. And ye shall comfort one another."

The tremulous voice ceased, and the hands slipped away.

I gave her money and Adèle thanked her prettily.

She cried a blessing upon us, I whistled to Nobby, and we strolled on. . . .

" Look at that baby," said Adèle. " Isn't he cute ? "

" Half a second," said I, turning and whistling. " Which baby ? "

" There," said Adèle, pointing. " With the golden hair."

A half-naked sun-kissed child regarded us with a shy smile. It was impossible not to respond. . . .

Again I turned and whistled.

" Where can he be ? " said Adèle anxiously.

" Oh, he always turns up," I said. " But, if you don't mind going back a little way, it'll save time. With all this noise. . . ."

We went back a little way. Then we went back a long way. Then we asked people if they had seen a little white dog with a black patch. Always the answer was in the negative. One man laughed and said something about " a dog in a fair," and Fear began to knock at my heart. I whistled until the muscles of my lips ached. Adèle wanted us to search separately, but I refused. It was not a place for her to wander alone. Feverishly we sought everywhere. Twice a white dog sent our hopes soaring, only to prove a stranger and dash them lower than before. Round and about and in and out among the booths and swings and merry-go-rounds we hastened, whistling, calling, and inquiring in vain. Nobby was lost.

* * * * *

We had intended to be home in time for tea.

As it was, we got back to White Ladies, pale and dejected, at a quarter to eight.

As she rose to get out of the car, Adèle gave a cry and felt frantically about her neck and throat.

" What's the matter ? " I cried.

" My pearls," she said simply. " They're not here."

For what it was worth, I called for lights, and we took the cushions out and looked in the car.

But there was no sign of the necklace. It was clean gone.

* * * * *

The lamentations with which the news of our misfortunes was received were loud and exceeding bitter.

Jill burst into tears ; Daphne tried vainly to comfort her, and then followed her example ; Berry and Jonah vied with each other in gloomy cross-examination of Adèle and myself concerning our movements since we had left White Ladies, and in cheerless speculation with regard to the probable whereabouts of our respective treasures.

After a hurried meal, the Rolls was again requisitioned, and all six of us proceeded to Fallow Hill. Not until eleven o'clock would

the fun of the fair be suspended, and it was better to be on the spot, even if for the second time we had to come empty away, than to spend the evening in the torment of inactivity.

Of the loss of the Sealyham we could speak more definitely than of that of the necklace. Nobby had been by my side when the gipsy hailed us, so that there was no doubt but that he was lost at the fair. Regarding her pearls, Adèle could speak less positively. In fact, to say that she had had the necklace before breakfast that morning was really as far as she could go. "I know I had it then," she affirmed, "because I always take it off before taking my bath, and I remember putting it on afterwards. As luck will have it, I was rather late this morning, and I couldn't fasten the safety-chain, so after two or three shots I gave up trying, intending to do it later on. And this is the result." She had not bathed again.

It was a sweet pretty gaud. So perfectly matched were its hundred and two pearls that many would have believed it unreal. It had belonged to her great-grandmother, and was not insured.

Arrived at Fallow Hill, we went straight to the police. The loss of the jewels we communicated to them alone. Somewhat shamefacedly and plainly against Adèle's will, I described the old gipsy and commended her to their vigilance. When they learned that she had laid hands upon Adèle, the two inspectors exchanged glances which there was no mistaking. . . .

So far as Nobby was concerned, as well as informing the police, we enlisted the sympathy of the Boy Scouts. Also we engaged six rustics to perambulate the fair and cry the loss of the Sealyham for all to hear. Information leading to his recovery would be rewarded with the sum of five pounds, while the crier to whom the communication was made would receive five more for himself. Our six employees went about their work with a will, bellowing lustily. Daphne and Jonah sat in the car, rejecting the luckless mongrels which were excitedly paraded before them, one after another, from the moment that our loss was made known. The rest of us hunted in couples—Adèle with Berry, and Jill with me—scouring the maze of temporary alleys and lanes and crooked quadrangles, till we knew them by heart.

The merry-go-rounds had stopped whirling, and the booths were being shrouded or dismantled, as Jill and I made our way to the car for the last time.

As we came up—

"That you, Boy?" cried Daphne. "Here's a waggoner who thinks he saw Nobby being taken away."

A little knot of men parted, and Jill and I thrust our way forward.

"Oi wouldden be sure," said a deep rough voice, "but a was a lil white chap of a dog on en' of a string. 'Twas a grume, simly, a-leadin' 'im Brooch way. An' a didn't want for to go, neither, for a stook toes in, a did, an' collar was 'alf-way over 'ead. Just come forth from 'The Three Bulls,' Oi 'ad, oop yonder o' Bear Lane, an' the toime were nigh three o' the aafternoon."

We questioned him closely, but he could tell us no more.

Slight as the clue was, it was infinitely better than none at all. If it was indeed Nobby that the waggoner had seen, the thief was taking him out of the village, at least in the direction of White Ladies. This was encouraging. That anyone making for the railway station would take the same road was a less pleasant reflection.

I took our informant's name and address and those of the crier who had brought him to the car. Then we dispensed some silver, and left for home.

Of Adèle's necklace we had heard nothing.

We determined to concentrate upon the recovery of the pearls upon the following day.

* * * * *

All through a wretched night the pitiful vacancy at the foot of my bed reminded me brutally of my loss. My poor little dog—where was he passing these dark hours? How many more must drag their way along before the warm white ball lay curled again in the crook of my knees? Had he rested there for the last time? With a groan I thrust the thought from me, but always it returned, leering hideously. Miserably I recited his qualities—his love for me, his mettle, his beauty, his unfailing good humour. . . . What naughtiness there was in him seemed very precious. Painfully I remembered his thousand pretty ways. He had a trick of waving his little paws, when he was tired of begging. . . .

Small wonder that I slept ill and fitfully.

Early as I was, the others were already at breakfast when I came down. Only Adèle had not appeared.

It was a melancholy meal.

Jonah said not a word, and Berry hardly

opened his mouth. There were dark rings under Jill's grey eyes, and Daphne looked pale and tired.

A communication from the Secretary of the Brooch Dog Show, enclosing a pass for the following day, and informing me that my Sealyham must arrive at the Show in the charge of not more than one attendant by 11 a.m., did not tend to revive our drooping spirits.

We had nearly finished, when, with a glance at the clock, my sister set her foot upon the bell.

As the butler entered the room—

"Send up and see if Miss Feste will breakfast upstairs, Falcon. I think——"

"Miss Feste has breakfasted, madam."

"Already?"

"Yes, madam. Her breakfast was taken to her before eight o'clock."

"Where is she?"

"I think she's out bicycling, madam."

"Bicycling?"

The inquiry leapt from five mouths simultaneously.

"Yes, madam. She sent for me and asked if I could find 'er a lady's bicycle, an' Greenaway was very 'appy to lend 'er 'ers, madam. An' Fitch pumped up the tires, an' she went off about 'alf-past eight, madam."

We stared at one another in bewilderment.

"Did she say where she was going?" said Berry.

"No, sir."

"All right, Falcon."

The butler bowed and withdrew.

Amid the chorus of astonished exclamation, Berry held up his hand.

"It's very simple," he said. "She's unhinged."

"Rubbish," said his wife.

"The disappearance of Nobby, followed by the loss of her necklace, has preyed upon her mind. Regardless alike of my feelings and of the canons of good taste, she rises at an hour which is almost blasphemous and goes forth unreasonably to indulge in the most hellish form of exercise ever invented. What further evidence do we need? By this time she has probably detached the lamp from the velocipede and is walking about, saying she's Florence Nightingale."

"Idiot," said Daphne.

"Not yet," said her husband, "but I can feel it coming on." He cast an eye downward and shivered. "I feared as much. My left leg is all unbuttoned."

"For goodness' sake," said his wife, "don't sit there drivelling——"

"Sorry," said Berry, "but I haven't got a clean bib left. This laundry strike——"

"I said 'drivelling,' not 'dribbling.' You know I did. And what are we wasting time for? Let's do something—anything."

"Right-oh," said her husband. "What about giving the bread some birds?" And with that he picked up a loaf and deliberately pitched it out of the window on to the terrace.

The fact that the casement was not open until after the cast made his behaviour the more outrageous.

The very wantonness of the act, however, had the excellent effect of breaking the spell of melancholy under which we were labouring.

In a moment all was confusion.

Jill burst into shrieks of laughter; Jonah, who had been immersed in *The Times*, cursed his cousin for the shock to his nerves; in a shaking voice Daphne assured the butler, whom the crash had brought running, that it was "All right, Falcon; Major Pleydell thought the window was open"; and the delinquent himself was loudly clamouring to be told whether he had won the slop-pail outright or had only got to keep it clean for one year.

Twenty minutes later Jonah had left for Brooch to see the Chief Constable about the missing jewels and arrange for the printing and distribution of an advertisement for Nobby. The rest of us, doing our utmost to garnish a forlorn hope with the seasoning of expectation, made diligent search for the necklace about the terrace, gardens, and tennis-lawn. After a fruitless two hours, we repaired to the house, where we probed the depths of sofas and chairs, emptied umbrella-stands, settles, flower-bowls and every other receptacle over which our guest might have leaned, and finally thrust an electric torch into the bowels of the piano and subjected that instrument to a thorough examination.

At length—

"I give it up," said Daphne, sinking into a chair. "I don't think it can be here."

"Nor I," said I. "I think we've looked everywhere."

"Yes," said Berry. "There's only the cesspool left. We can drag that before lunch, if you like, but I should prefer one more full meal before I die."

"Boy! Boy!"

Somewhere from behind closed doors a sweet excited voice was calling.

I sprang to the door.

"Yes, Adèle, yes?" I shouted.

A moment later my lady sped down a passage and into the hall.

"Get the car quick. I've found Nobby."

Again want of breath intervened, and Adèle besought us to make ready the car.

We explained vociferously that Jonah had taken the Rolls and would be back any minute. Whilst we were waiting, would she not tell us her tale?



"Jonah limped to my dear and put her hand to his lips."

"Where?" we yelled.

"That man Bason's got him."

Her announcement momentarily deprived us of breath. Then we all started, and in the next two minutes sufficient was said about the retired music-hall proprietor to make that gentleman's pendulous ears burst into blue flame.

Seating herself upon the arm of a chair, she complied forthwith.

"None of you seemed to suspect him, and, as I'm usually wrong, I decided to say nothing. But last night I asked a Boy Scout where he lived. Curiously enough, the boy had a brother who was a gardener in Bason's employ. That made me think. I

asked him whether I could have a word with his brother, and he told me he lived at a cottage close to his work, and was almost always at home between nine and half-past in the morning.

"When he came home this morning, I was waiting for him. He seemed a nice man, so I told him the truth and asked him to help me. Thorn—that's his name—doesn't like Bason a bit, and at once agreed that he was quite capable of the dirtiest work, if anyone got in his way. He hadn't, he said, seen Nobby, but that wasn't



surprising. If the dog was there, he'd probably be in the stables, and with those Thorn has nothing to do.

"Bason doesn't keep horses, but he uses one of the coach-houses as a garage. The chauffeur seems to be rather worse than his master. He's loathed by the rest of the staff, and, while he and Bason are as thick as thieves, neither trusts the other an inch.

"The first thing to do, obviously, was to find out if Nobby was there. Everything was always kept locked, so I determined to try the 'Blondel' stunt—yes, I know a lot of English History—and try and make Cœur-de-Lion speak for himself.

"First we synchronised our watches. Then Thorn showed me the house and told me exactly where the garage and stables were—close to the gates, happily. Then we arranged that in ten minutes' time he should try to get the chauffeur out of the way, while I took a look round. More than that we couldn't fix, but it was understood that, if there was a dog there and Thorn got an opening, he was to undo his collar and give him a chance to make good on his own. That wouldn't involve Thorn, for he could fasten the collar again and make it look as if Nobby had slipped it."

"But what a brain!" said Berry. "One short month of my society, and the girl——"

An avalanche of protest cut short the speaker.

Adèle continued, gurgling.

"At first everything went all right. At twenty minutes of ten I put my head round the corner to see the chauffeur and Thorn disappearing at the other end of the yard. I stepped out of my cover and had a look round. There were stables on one side, and a coach-house and garage on the other, and the yard, which was open at both ends, lay in between. I was just going to try the loose-boxes—I was going to 'miaow' like a cat and see what answer I got—when I heard Bason's voice calling Banana. . . .

"There was only one door open, and that was the garage. I dashed for it and looked round for somewhere to hide. The place was as bare as your hand. But there was nothing the matter with the limousine, so I got inside and sat down on the floor.

"I was only just in time.

"Bason came stamping into the yard, shouting for 'Arthur,' and the next moment Nobby gave tongue.

"I just had to look.

"There was Blue Banana with his nose to the door of the loose-box immediately opposite, snarling and showing his teeth, Bason was hammering on the door, yelling, 'Shut up, you brute!' and Nobby, of course, was barking to beat the band."

As she spoke, a faint familiar cough from the drive announced the return of Jonah from Brooch.

In less time than it takes to record, I had flown to the front-door and put him wise. Two minutes later we were all in the Rolls, which was scudding at

an unlawful speed along the Fallow Hill road.

"There's nothing much more to tell," said Adèle, as we clamoured for her to proceed. "I thought Bason would never go, and, when at last he did, the chauffeur took the opportunity of changing the two front tires.

"For over two hours I sat in that car. At last the man shut the place up and, I suppose, went to his dinner.

"I had meant to borrow the limousine, but he'd taken the key of the switch, so I couldn't do that. And I couldn't get at Nobby, for the stable was locked. So I just pelted back to Thorn's cottage, told his wife to tell him my news, picked up the bicycle and came right back."

For a moment no one said anything. Then—

"I shall recommend you," said Berry, "for the Most Excellent Order of the Beer Engine. A very coveted distinction. The membership is limited to seven million."

"Yes," said I, "for a most daring reconnaissance behind the enemy's lines. You know, this ranks with the penetration of the Kiel Canal. Seriously, Adèle, I'm terribly grateful."

My lady looked at me with a shy smile.

"What did the gipsy say?" she said. "After all, I'm only obeying orders. And now——"

A cry from Jonah interrupted her, and the rest of us started inquiringly as he clapped on the brakes.

As the car came to a standstill—

"What's the matter?" I cried.

By way of answer, my cousin took off his hat and, producing a silk handkerchief, deliberately wiped his forehead with the utmost care. Then he replaced his hat and looked up and over his right shoulder. . . .

From the top of a mossy bank by the side of the road Nobby was regarding us wide-eyed. Apparently he had broken prison and was on his way home. Time was nothing to him, and the roots of a wayside beech upon an attractive rise cried aloud for inspection. Besides, there was a serious loss of liberty which had to be made good. . . .

For a moment rescue-party and prize looked one another in the face. Then the latter hurled himself panting into the road and leapt into the arms which I stretched out of the car.

No prodigal ever received such an ovation. There was literally a fight for his person. Jill snatched him from me and pressed his nose to her face; Berry dragged him from her protesting arms and set him upon his knee; Daphne tore him away and hugged him close. Such of us as were temporarily disseized, stroked and fondled his limbs and cried endearing epithets. Only our fair American looked on with a wistful smile.

"So, you see," she said, "he's done without me, after all."

I took hold of her hand.

"My dear," I said, "your argument would be more forcible if he was wearing a collar."

There was a buzz of excitement as my statement was feverishly confirmed.

"I agree," said Berry. "What's more, he's brought us a souvenir."

As he spoke, he plucked something which was adhering to the terrier's beard.

It was a tuft of slate-grey hair.

* * * * *

The "All Comers" Event was won by Nobby, who beat a French bulldog by a short head.

Neither Blue Bandala nor his owner put in an appearance. For this a particularly curt note, bluntly requiring the return of the Sealyham's collar, may have been responsible.

The waggoner and the lad who found him received their rewards.

So also did Thorn. His letter of acknowledgment was addressed to Adèle.

DEAR MADAM,

Thank you kindly for the 5 lbs. I got to the dog by way of the ayloft which were in one of the stalls I undone is coller and here he run out the first dore as was open and appening on Blew Bandarlerer did not harf put it acrost him and Mr. Bason says I command you to seperate them dogs Arthur he says and Arthur fetches Blew B. one what he ment for your dog and Mr. Bason fetches him another what he ment for Arthur so the chough cort it proper.

Yours respecfully,
G. THORN.

But for the loss of the pearls, we should have been jubilant.

* * * * *

Three days had elapsed since the dog show.

The whole of the morning and part of the afternoon I had spent in a bathroom, supervising the disconnection, severance, and inspection of the waste-pipe which served the basin. When, hot and dejected,

I made my report at half-past three, Adèle thanked me as prettily as if I had found the pearls.

I retired to wash and change into flannels.

It must have been two hours later when I looked up from the operation of combing Nobby and took my pipe from my mouth.

"Oh, Adèle," I said simply, "I do love you so."

Adèle put out a hand and touched my hair.

"I'm glad you do," she said gently.

As I got upon my feet, one end of her necklace hung trailing over the edge of my trousers where I had turned them up. They were the pair I had worn at tennis the day we had gone to the fair, and it must have fallen into the fold when we were finding the thorn.

Adèle saw it too, but, when I would have stooped, she shook her head.

Then I looked into her eyes, and there found such a light that I forgot the pearls and the rolling world with them.

As she slipped into my arms, she threw back her head.

"Once, at Port Said, you kissed me," she whispered. "And again at Rome." I nodded. "But this is your own home."

"Yes," I said steadily. "And here I plight thee my troth."

The brown eyes closed, and a glorious smile swept into the beautiful face.

For a moment I gazed at her. . . .

Then I kissed the red, red lips.

So we comforted one another.

* * * * *

The unexpected arrival of the laundry van at five minutes to eight, with, amongst other things, a month's table-linen, had pardonably dislocated the service of dinner.

Whilst the table was being relaid, we spent the time in the library, gathered about the violet-tongued comfort of a chestnut-root fire.

"You know," said Jonah, looking up from an armchair, "if we don't—— Good Heavens!" His exclamation was so violent that we all jumped. "Why," he cried, staring at Adèle, "you've found them!"

A common cry of amazement broke from Daphne, Berry, and Jill, and our guest started guiltily and put a hand to her throat.

"O-o-oh, I"—she shot an appealing glance at me—"we quite forgot. Boy found them in the garden. Whilst he was combing Nobby."

Berry looked round.

"You hear?" he said. "They quite forgot. . . . They stumble upon jewels worth a month of strike pay—baubles whose loss has stupefied the County, and forget to mention it. And I spent two hours this afternoon in a gas-mask studying the plan of the drains and calculating whether, if the second manhole was opened and a gorgonzola put down to draw the fire, Jonah could reach the grease-trap before he became unconscious." He raised his eyes to heaven and groaned. "The only possible excuse," he added, "is that you're both in . . ."

His voice tailed off, as he met Adèle's look, and he got suddenly upon his feet.

Jonah stood up, too.

Daphne took Adèle's hands in hers and turned to me a face radiant with expectation.

Jill caught at my sleeve and began to tremble. I put my arm about her and looked round.

"We plead that excuse," I said.

For a moment nobody moved.

Then Jonah limped to my dear and put her hand to his lips. Adèle stooped and kissed him.

"You beautiful darling," breathed my sister. "Sargent shall paint you, and you shall hang at the foot of the stairs."

The two kissed one another tenderly.

Then Adèle stretched out her white arms to grey-eyed Jill. My little cousin just clung to her.

"Oh, Adèle," she whispered, "I'm so glad. B-but you won't go away? He and you'll stay with us, won't you?"

"If you want me, darling."

Berry cleared his throat.

"Of course," he said, "as the head of the family—the overlord—I should have come first. However. I shall kiss her 'Good night' instead. Possibly I shall ker-rush her to me." He turned to me. "This will be the second time within my memory that a Pleydell has married above him."

"Very true," said I. "When was the first?"

"When I married your sister."

I nodded dreamily.

"I think," I said, "I think I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth."

Berry shook his head.

"Not a spoon," he said. "A soup-ladle."

The door opened, and Falcon came in.

"Dinner is served, madam."

CHRISTMAS BELLS

AS I came up Allan's-Way,
I heard the Christmas bells a-ringin';
Such a joyous din a-makin',
Their very hearts, ye'd think, was breakin'
Wi' the message they were bringin'.

"Peace on earth, good-will to men!
Hold ye, people, from yer labours;
'Tis to-day the Lord was bidden
To His kingdom manger-hidden;
Be ye friends this day, an' neighbours."

"Hist!" I cried; and "Hist!" again
Shouted; but the bells was stronger.
"Would ye have me make no ruein'
On Old Josh for his ill-doin'
Them six months or mebbe longer?"

Naught there was to make me fear:
Only fields an' lanes a-glistenin',
Ne'er a soul passed was a stranger;
Yet I wearied of my anger,
Shamed for Him that stood a-listenin'.

As I came up Allan's-Way,
The Christmas bells made fuss an' riot,
The children ran past for church-goin';
Then I forgave Old Josh, unknowin',
And in my heart was ease and quiet.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.



Photo by] [*The Daily Mail.*

BLACKHEATH *v.* GUY'S HOSPITAL, AT HONOR OAK PARK, 1920: A SNAPSHOT TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AFTER A LINE-OUT.

THE CHANGES IN THE GAME OF RUGBY FOOTBALL

By E. H. D. SEWELL

WHATEVER fault the historian may have to find with our great man-rearing game of Rugby Football in regard to the changes which have taken place since that memorable day when William Webb Ellis tucked the ball under his arm and ran with it on the famous close of Rugby School, then and there giving the game its distinctive feature, there is one aspect of the game which he cannot condemn, and that is its amateurism. No law of the oft-quoted Medes and Persians was surely ever so immutable as that Rugby Union law which states with commendable though blunt brevity: "Professionalism is illegal." For its unswerving adherence to this bedrock principle the Rugby Union suffered for long years. Time was when Yorkshire and Lancashire players bulked largely in England's XV. Then came the breakaway on a question of payment for broken time, the formation of the Northern Union, and a long series of defeats in the International matches.

Thus, after the breach, England won but two games with Scotland between 1898–1909; she won only five against Ireland, and only one against Wales during the same black eleven years. The formation of the Northern Union made no difference whatever to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, though the last-named is to-day feeling the effects of it very severely. So far as England is concerned, therefore, one of the greatest changes between old and present-time Rugby occurred when the formation of a professional form of the Rugby game, under different rules and played by teams of thirteen instead of fifteen players, caused her to rely almost entirely upon her Public Schools and Universities for her team.

In the game itself two of the most vital changes between Rugby as now played and that of the 'seventies to the early 'nineties

have been the adoption of the four three-quarters game, and the abolition of two umpires and one referee in favour of one referee. I do not propose to go back to the prehistoric days of twenties, when, if half one hears is true, weight and lack of pace were the essential requirements in a forward, kicking ability, pace, and apparent selfishness those in a back player. Whether the reduction by one in the numbers of the forwards and the increase by one of the occupants of the three-quarter line has improved the game will always be debated where past and present Rugby men do assemble. If one thing is certain, it is that until the three or four years immediately preceding the War, when the standard of play had improved out of all knowledge, play under the four three-quarter system ruled as much across the field as in the days of three three-quarters it had ruled up and down the field. Everything seemed to be subordinated to a form of combination that was more apparent than real, the fine individualistic tendencies of the old game being stifled by the rather laboured attempts to excel at what was known as the passing game. "If the touch line was the goal line, ours would be the best School team in the United Kingdom," said a very famous coach to me, when I was seeking to estimate the Public School form of 1917–18. What he said applied to a good many club teams during the early years of this century. The New Zealand team of 1905 came and showed the players of the United Kingdom that, after all, the goal line was the one to cross, and they had more different ways of getting across it than any fifteen before or since them. Their visit provided the great awakening, and it would be a most extraordinarily different resistance that an equally gifted New Zealand team would encounter if it were to tour these islands now, in spite of the enormous sacrifices the Rugby game made in the War.



ENGLAND *v.* SCOTLAND: THE MATCH OF 1891.

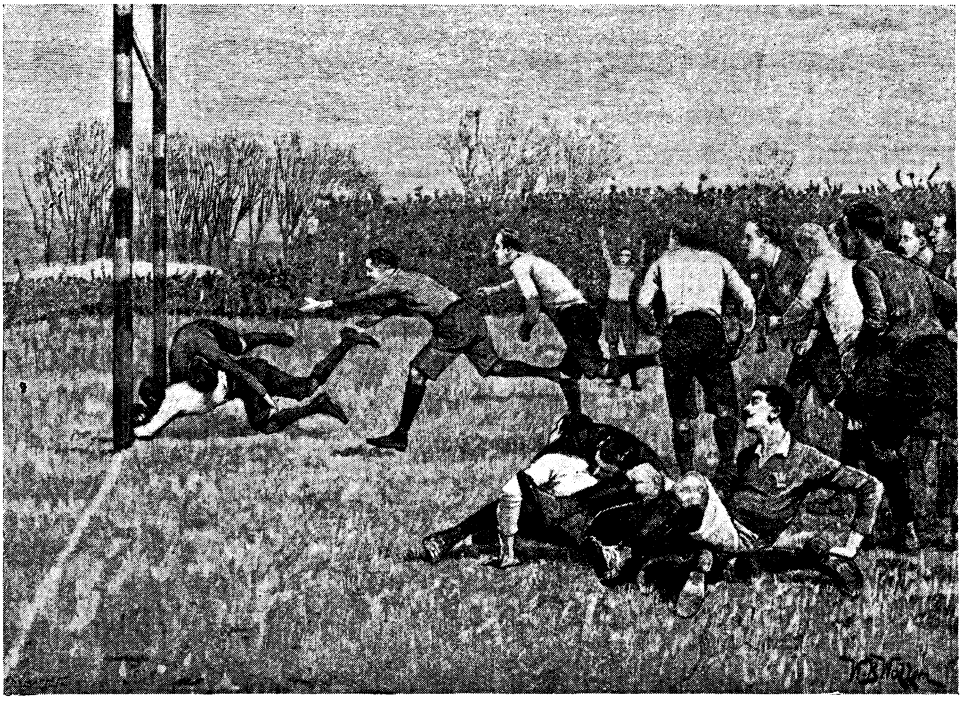
From a drawing.

The abolition of the two umpires and one referee system in favour of single control, was not, in my humble opinion, a move to the advantage of football. It created a "blind side," and in that fact lurks great danger. That region is the home of the player of dubious morals, and within it is usually to be found the *agent provocateur*, if there is one in either fifteen. Many tries annually recorded would not be recorded if there were to be a reversion to the old system of seeing fair play; but, inasmuch

as referees are none too plentiful, and it would be very difficult to get three neutral officials for every match, we have to make the best of the single and much-harassed individual who gets all the metaphorical kicks and extremely few of the ha'pence, while he gives up practically every Saturday afternoon throughout the season for the general good and the enjoyment of others. So that this paper may not suffer the charge of being too technical, it is necessary to pause here to state briefly what the "blind side" means. The blind side refers to that

happened. Yet that result stands, and is included in the annual articles which are written and which state how the score as between these two Unions stands. Since we shall never revert to the old system of two umpires and a referee, the cure for all blind side evils rests with the players, the captains of teams, and the selection committees. They know.

If I were asked to state which is the most marked difference between Rugby football of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I should reply unhesitatingly the "open"



ENGLAND *v.* WALES, AT BLACKHEATH, 1892: AN INDIVIDUAL TRY BY THE SCRUM-HALF.
From a drawing by W. B. Wollen.

part of the game, and especially the side remote of the scrummage, which it is a physical impossibility for a single referee to see. Naturally the black sheep of the flock favour this side of the game, which suffers accordingly, though happily not excessively, the black sheep being few in number, and extremely well known in consequence. I could, an I would, cite chapter and verse of one of the season's most important games that was won out and out by an act committed on the blind side of the scrum, it having been quite impossible for the referee to see what

game. I am convinced that in a match between two reasonably well-matched first-class club fifteens a try takes a great deal more scoring to-day than it did in the 'nineties, and the more matches coming under that heading that I see, the more convinced am I of this. Concerted team defence has been brought to something like high art by the best clubs. It was not without good and solid reason that A. D. Stoop wrote round to members and probable members of the Harlequins XV. of this season, before the season began, to the effect that he was going to interest himself in the play of the



ENGLAND *v.* IRELAND, AT RICHMOND, 1893: AN IRISH FORWARD USING THE HAND-OFF, COMMON IN THE GAME OF THAT DATE, BUT RARE TO-DAY.

From a drawing by H. Burgess.

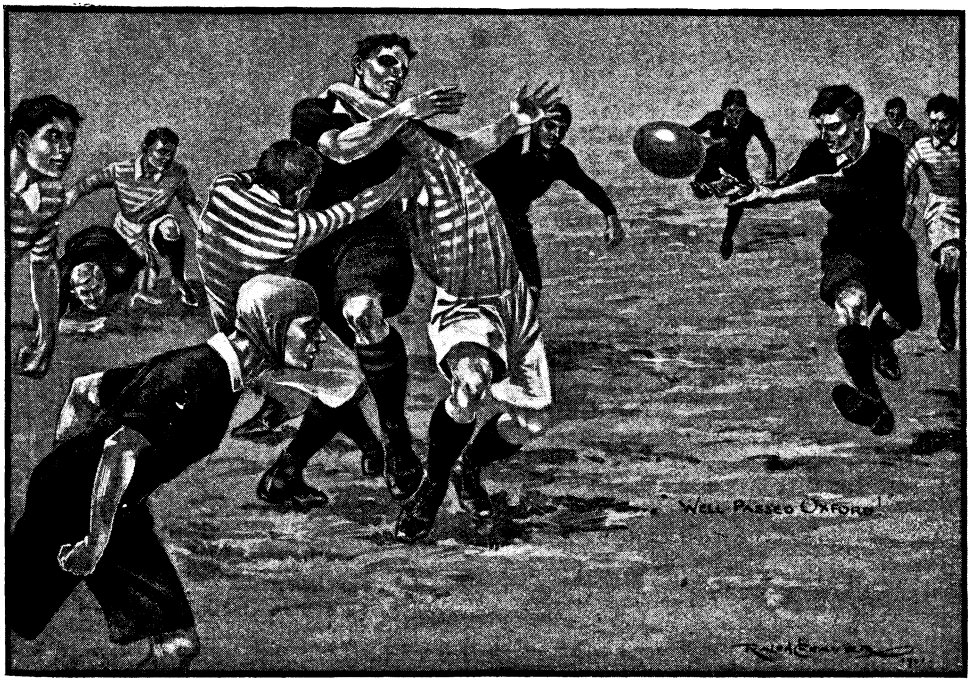
side, and that it was up to each one of them to get and keep fit—in other words, to play the game by their club.

To such an appeal there could be but one response, and I refer to it in this paper as evidence of, at any rate, one important change which has taken place in the conduct of club Rugby.

It is such actions as Stoop's which greatly assist in producing the team-spirit that is the foundation both of team-defence and team-attack, as distinct from the often purely fortuitous attack of individual players. The same spirit saturates the Blackheath team, now so ardently run by Lieut.-Colonel W. S. D. Craven, D.S.O., who is a very fit person to cross swords with Stoop or anyone else as a team-manager, a tactician, or the right sort to run a first-class club. It is due to such organisers as these that the best teams of this century are, I am convinced, far ahead of those preceding them in such matters as stopping tries, sudden conversion of defence into successful attack, real as opposed to imitation combination in attack, of which we see so much—and much of it passing quite unnoticed!—in high football. Briefly put, more trouble is taken nowadays to train and develop promising material. In this direction the enthusiastic labours of Mr. A. Podmore, every Christmas and Easter holidays for the past five years, have played a big part in giving the leading and coming-on players of our Public Schools a most needed "rubbing shoulders" with each other, while at the same time keeping them out of stuffy cinemas, which damage their eyesight, and mentally foggy theatres, which in so many cases injure their minds. It used to be considered frightfully *infra dig.* for Eton to talk to a Grammar School boy, but now the Etonian head rubs the skin off its cheek-bones in the scrum against an Aldenham or an Epsom hip, the Marlburian seigneur is truly and faithfully flung to earth by the small boy from Exeter or Felsted, and it is found that the resultant contamination does both no harm whatsoever! A change in the life of the Rugby game this, one which I regard as not the least important one of recent years. Honour where it is due. The inception of these schools holiday matches took place in the brain of Lieut.-Colonel W. Shirley, C.M.G., the first regular matches of the kind being played under his ægis at Queen's Club during December, 1915, and January, 1916. Then Messrs. A. Podmore and H. A. Burlinson (secretary, Rosslyn Park R.U.F.C.), developed the idea, with a result of much value to the game in general.

Coming to the present season and the very latest changes in the game, I find myself

to a certain extent in the land of conjecture. The history of the world seems to agree that laws are made to be broken, whence emanates the possibility that in its laudable desire to improve the game, the International Board (which, be it noted, exists for the purpose of framing the laws of the game *for International matches*, and for settling all questions connected with or arising out of an International match, including appeals against referees' decisions therein, and all questions of an International character between unions arising otherwise than out of an International match), may have made mistakes this time. One of its new rules, or, rather, amendments to old rules, viz., that if the ball is not immediately put into the scrum, a free kick shall be awarded, may have the reverse effect to that for which it was framed, viz., to speed up the game by obviating delays caused by that form of play which prevents the ball from arriving in the scrum, whatever may be the cause. One certain effect of this new rule is that an attacking player close to his opponents' goal-line may seize the ball and, provided only one opponent is present, he may proceed himself to put the ball in the scrum formed by this opponent and himself. It is not inconceivable that his single opponent, taking in the situation at a glance, may do all he can to avoid being made a party to this one *versus* one scrum (which is allowed by the law defining a scrummage, which says that a scrummage "is formed by one or more players from each side," etc., etc.), or this single opponent may himself pick up the ball and cause more delay, consequent on the free kick which would follow his refusal to put the ball in the scrum, than would have taken place without this new law. In fact, the position now teems with all manner of possibilities, some of them not without humour, as to the possible playing effect of this new enactment. For the purposes of the definition of a scrummage, a full-back is on the same plane as a forward. If, therefore, A, an attacking three-quarter, outdistancing his fellows, is tackled within a couple of yards of the line by the full-back, gets up with the ball (which can now *only* be brought into play again with the foot), and seeks to form a scrum with the full-back, he has every right to do so, and the full-back none to deny him! This is not *reductio ad absurdum*, but a very real and pressing possibility. I for one am starting out into the unknown



THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE MATCH, 1901.
From a drawing by Ralph Cleaver.

land of the season of 1920–21, which this amendment or change, at all events, has brought about, fully prepared for anything and ready to be surprised at nothing.

In the amendment to the law concerning the restarting of game after a kick at goal from a try, the wording is insufficient. It says that the ball shall "be kicked off" from half-way. It should have said "the game shall be restarted by a place kick from half-way if the try has been converted, and by a drop kick if the try has not been converted." There is so often a doubt in the minds of the onlookers as to whether a try has been converted that the different methods of restarting the game would settle the point without recourse to the score board, which is not always correct even where it does exist.

Other changes, due to International Board amendments passed at their meeting in July last, are that the player who makes the fair catch *must* himself take the free kick (this is merely a reversion to an old rule); that where a scrummage is ordered within the 25-line for an offence within ten yards of the touch-line, such scrummage shall be formed at ten yards from the touch-line; that the charge in the case of penalty kicks shall be abolished. On paper these are all good amendments, and likely to prove so in practice. But I anticipate that the free kick for not immediately placing the ball in the scrum may not work well in practice. It has been publicly stated by one of the officials responsible for the amendments that one of the advantages of this amendment will be that it will speed up the game. That, I suggest, is inadvisable in the interests of the game. Properly—that is, fairly—played, the game is quite fast enough—certainly fast enough for boys.

Which brings me to another point. Are the laws of the game made by the International Board to govern the game as played in the Public Schools and the clubs? The Board exists only for the above two stated purposes. Its laws and enactments are for the few who are chosen to play in International football. Yet it is the practice for all players to play as the Board tells them to play. Is this kind of dual control good for the game?

During the past ten years or so a change of the greatest importance was made when it was decided to nominate on the English selection committee practically only old International players. English Rugby has never looked back since the change. I believe I am correct in stating that only one man has served on that body since the change who is not an old International.



ENGLAND *v.* NEW ZEALAND, AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, 1905: AN ENGLISH POSITION BEING BROKEN UP BY INTERPLAY BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND FORWARDS AND BACKS PASSING IN THEIR OWN TWENTY-FIVE.

From a drawing by Ernest Prater.



Photo by] [*Central News.*

SOUTH AFRICA *v.* ENGLAND, AT TWICKENHAM, 1913: A CRITICAL LINE-OUT FROM TOUCH.

A good example of the superiority of the South Africans at the line-out. This jumping at the line-out was a thing almost unknown in the 'eighties.



Photo by] [*Sport & General.*

R.N.C. GREENWICH *v.* R.M.A. WOOLWICH.

The Scottish Football Union's selection committee, as also that of Ireland, though in lesser degree, is composed mainly of old International players. The Welsh XV. is chosen by the Welsh Rugby Union Committee, and theirs is the easiest task of the five, in which number we have now to include French Rugby, the task of whose selectors is the most difficult of all.

In conclusion, the chief change in the game is from the stodgy and mainly forward, with a steadily increasing amount of individualism behind the scrum, to the present "open" game, which received its genesis in the four three-quarter game that was bred and brought to manhood in Wales. There "heeling" by forwards was first thought of, and the illegality of successive rows of forwards becoming off-side, as the ball filtered through the scrum, was first blinked at. It has for thirty years and more been legal for six or seven off-side forwards, as long as their heads are down in a scrummage, to obstruct the opposing side, while an unfortunate back has only to have the toe of his boot between the ball and his opponents' goal-line to find his name in the headlines of next day's papers, after, perhaps, having lost the match for his side by a penalty goal! Which only proves what a lot you may do unpenalised in a scrum! That the "open" game depends on this "heeling" is obvious. That it is a better game than the old game the honorary treasurers of the various Unions could readily prove. That the game scarcely admits of "improvements" is probably very near the truth indeed. Some there are who would "improve" it at the cost of severance with the Unions of the United Kingdom. To them there will never be but one answer by all true Rugby Unionists.

CHRISTMAS IN THE WOODS.

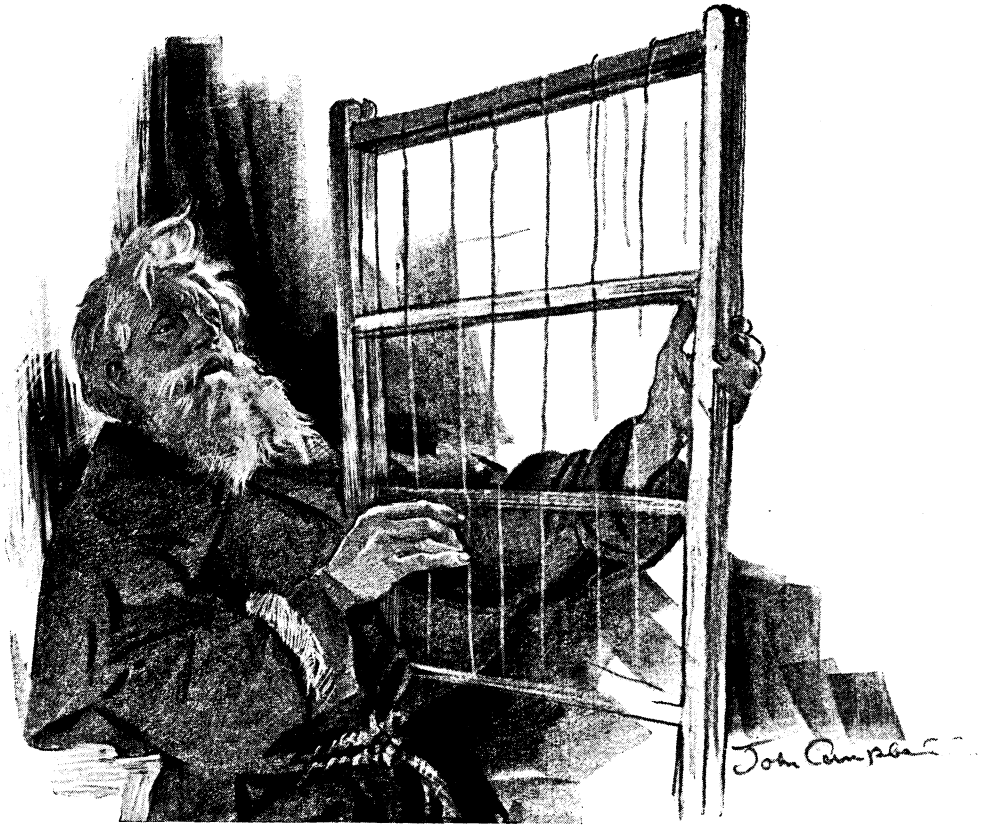
IF one shall walk within the lonely wood
Late on the Holy Night,
Mysterious things, hard to be understood,
May steal upon his sight,
And on his ears strange melodies may fall,
Whose minstrel he shall not behold at all.

The rose-red berries on the spindle-bough,
Baring each heart of gold,
Themselves with mystic energy endow,
And frolic in the cold;
The trailing ivies clap their hands and trip
In ecstasy of joyful fellowship.

And now the little mosses whisper low,
Huddled in heaping leaves,
Telling each other tales of long ago,
And bygone Christmas Eves—
Oh, rustle, rustle! And the fern-roots sing
Softly, expectantly, as though 'twere Spring.

Then drops a stillness for a moment's space,
No movement and no speech—
Was that the glimmer of a Child's dear Face
Beyond the tallest beech?
Surely a dream? . . . And yet I know that He
Walked in the lonely wood to-night with me.

MAY BYRON.



THE MESSENGER OF PEACE

A CHRISTMAS STORY

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

IT was just after dinner on Christmas Eve. They had dined early, to allow time for the usual decorations. The pleasant Superintendent of the expensive Asylum at Farside, where the patients were treated as honoured guests, sat in his study facing a well-featured and burly old gentleman, nearly old enough to be his parent, who was attired like the Father Christmas of coloured prints.

"Now, really, Santa Claus," he protested, "you ought not to want any more. You have had a new cloak—it looks uncommonly well—and a larger sack, and your friends have supplied an increased number of Christmas presents, and you have made a very tactful and successful distribution to your fellow-patients."

"They aren't children," Santa Claus complained, pulling at his great white

beard. That part of the character grew upon him.

"Simmons is," the Superintendent claimed, "and very pleased with the hoop that you gave him."

"Ah!" said Santa Claus. "Yes. He's bowling it round the gymnasium now. I meant real children. He's fifty, you know. Of course it is a great privilege to be the Santa Claus of the asylum. I fully appreciate that. At the same time I feel that my duties should not be confined to lunatics."

"Ssh!" cried the Superintendent in horror.

"We are talking between ourselves," Santa Claus explained. "Of course I should not dream of using the word before *them*. But, speaking within these walls, they are *not* children, and they *are*—let us say, 'mentally unbalanced.' Indeed, it was owing to their sad condition that I felt able to take them under my care. But, as you know, the office of Santa Claus is properly with the young. I don't wish to be unreasonable in my demands. As you are aware, I have not insisted upon my reindeer sleigh. But at the same time——"

"I am obliged to you," the Superintendent acknowledged. "You are always open to reason."

"So are you! So are you! Now, I understand that there are a number of children in the village who should be visited. I think, if you'll let me have about fifty pounds——"

"My dear sir," the Superintendent cried, "I should have to write to your guardians for the money, and——"

"It's my money," Santa Claus stated. "At least, it belonged to a man who used to be me. He—something happened to his children. They went in a ship, and——"

"Yes, yes," the Superintendent interrupted. "Your friends never refuse you anything in reason, you know. You would not ask for anything else, of course."

"Of course not," Santa Claus agreed. "What could be more reasonable than my taking presents to children? It is what I am appointed to do."

"Quite so—quite so. Only it is too late to make the necessary arrangements for doing it this year. I will note it carefully for next Christmas. That's the best I can manage. Have another cigarette before you go." He made an entry in a book. "It shall be seen to. Now, the next point. You wanted something for yourself?"

"Yes," said Santa Claus. "I want a harp."

"A harp? Do you play one?"

"No-o. You see, it goes with the character."

"Come, come! Santa Claus doesn't have a harp."

"Ah, but the Messenger of Peace does!" The old gentleman stood up and posed with outstretched arms. "*I am the Messenger of Peace!*" he declaimed. He had a remarkably fine voice.

"Nonsense!" the Superintendent said firmly. "You can't be any more people. You're five already."

"Four of them are delusions," Santa Claus told him calmly. "To-morrow I shall *think* I'm the North Wind, but——"

"You're not to blow in the patients' ears, remember," the Superintendent reminded him. "You've promised me."

"Yes, yes! . . . About Easter I shall *think* I am Mr. Stacey. That *was* my name once, by the way. John Stacey, of Stacey and Mills. That's where the money comes from, isn't it? . . . If his children hadn't gone in that ship! You lose everything when you lose your children. Without them, you aren't *any*body; you——"

"Yes, yes." The Superintendent patted his shoulder. "But you aren't John Stacey now. So you can't worry about his children. You must see that, a reasonable man like you. It would be absurd."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Santa Claus laughed, a big cheery laugh. "Ha, ha, ha! Of course it would. John Stacey is a delusion. So are his children—I see, I see! . . The other one is a delusion—when we go to the seaside, and I fancy I'm a seal."

"A seal that can teach other people to swim, remember."

"Yes, yes. I can do that. I didn't think of it till your wife suggested it last summer. It's better than looking for fish. There aren't any, of course. *They're* a delusion! So is the ridiculous notion that the seal turns into a shopkeeper! Till Christmastime only, of course. Do you know, Chief, this Santa Claus business is a bit of a delusion, too? But I only want a harp, and I'd really *be* the Messenger of Peace. Come! A harp wouldn't cost so much, and I'm bound to have it sooner or later. When I am an angel, you know . . . I wonder if *that* is a delusion?"

"I hope not," the Superintendent said. "I hope not! . . . Well, I'll see what can be done about the harp; but I must write to your trustees, and I shan't get an answer for a few days."

" A few days ! It will be no use then. I shall be the North Wind ! "

" Then you can blow upon the harp," the Superintendent pacified him. " It's better than blowing at the patients. They are a little—you know ! " He winked at Santa Claus.

" I know ! " Santa Claus winked at him. " I'll humour them. They're touchy, poor creatures, very. A little fresh air does them good. And if the North Wind didn't blow, it wouldn't *be* the North Wind ! "

" If I were you I should remain Santa Claus till the harp comes," the Superintendent said. " It may be a delusion, but it's a fine delusion. And look how it suits you. I *never* saw the distribution done better than you managed it to-night. Everybody was so pleased. I shall always treasure the pipe you gave me ; and my wife was delighted with the bag. That was the best present of the lot."

" I meant it to be," Santa Claus said. " *She's* the best of the lot. She reminds me of my wife—I mean John Stacey's. He was married, and they had three children, and——"

" I know, I know ! If you'll excuse me now, I've Burgess waiting to see me. That's a worrying case. I wish *you* could influence him. You have such a way of convincing people."

" I'll never convince him he's not a mouse, poor chap," Santa Claus said sadly.

" No, but if you could persuade him that the bathroom isn't a trap ? Eh ? "

" I'll tell him I've taken the bait out of it," Santa Claus proposed gleefully. " Cook will give me some cheese, and I'll show it to him, and declare that I've pulled it off the hook. Poor Burgess ! It's an awful thing to be mad ! "

" An awful thing," the Superintendent agreed. " Good night, my dear chap ! "

" An awful thing," he repeated to himself, when the door had closed, " but sometimes it's a mercy. The next time that he's Stacey—— The heart is very irregular, and if he has such paroxysms of grief as he had last year—— Dear old chap ! Jessie's quite right. He's the best fellow in the asylum. He must have been a grand man. So clever ! . . . I'll send and tell cook to give him the cheese. Burgess will probably fancy that *he's* the trap then, and keep away from him. They're best apart in the North Wind season ; and that's due to-morrow ! . . . Unless he decides to wait for the harp. The Messenger of Peace ! Umph ! I don't see any particular objection. It might amuse him to learn the harp. He's a good musician."

Santa Claus started for the kitchen to get the cheese ; but he spied a small folding clothes-horse in the passage just outside. It occurred to him that, doubled up, it would make a good frame for a temporary harp. He had plenty of string, and, as he could not play the instrument, it was perhaps as well that the wires should not sound. So he seized the clothes-horse and carried it up to his bedroom, a big, well-furnished room on the first floor.

He heard the sound of hoofs outside, and peeped through the blinds to see if it happened to be his reindeer sleigh, but found that it was only a cab.

" Tut, tut ! " he cried. " And all those poor little children waiting for Santa Claus ! . . . But only the children need him, and all the world needs peace . . . Peace before presents. That sounds all right. So I expect it isn't . . . Ah, here's the string ! I knew I had a ball."

He got to work, tying the folds of the clothes-horse together first, and then " stringing " it, and all the time muttering to himself.

" Of course I haven't the costume. I'm not sure what the correct costume *is* . . . Wings chiefly, I think. Very little but wings. I must ask the doctor's wife. She was very helpful about my robes . . . Nice little soul —just naughty and tiresome *enough*, I should think ! They're fond of each other. I like to see that . . . Wings would be difficult to manage, and cold. I wonder what Peace wore in the winter ? Something seasonable, I hope . . . Why not the garb of Santa Claus ? . . . *Why* not ? . . . Why *not ?* . . . It is the children who make peace. That man Stacey's children—— But I mustn't think about them when I am Santa Claus. No, no ! . . . That's ten strings. If they would sound, it would be a very good harp, though I couldn't play it. But I can sing—lots of little carols and things . . . The man Stacey was a good singer. I remember that he used to teach carols to his children. There were three of them, and they grew up, and they all went on that ship, and—— My God ! " He clasped his hands suddenly and dropped the harp. " If I had been Stacey—— Tut, tut ! I mustn't think of him. He went mad when he lost his children—quite mad ! It would never do for *me* to go mad. The Chief's wife says so. If I went mad, she

says, I couldn't go to tea with her; and she looks forward to my visits. Bless her! . . . I've several delusions already, but that's different from being mad. *He* says *that* . . . I might get rid of that one about the North Wind, and be the Messenger of Peace instead! . . . But, of course, I *am*!"

He picked up the harp and surveyed himself in the looking-glass.

"Why," he asked, "should I not be Santa Claus also? The two characters are not incongruous. Dear me, no! . . . With that money that I hid—— Ha, ha! One doesn't take the Chief in often, but he little guessed how I concealed that! I'll spend it on the children, and get Mills to give me some more, next time he comes. He calls me 'old partner.' I wonder why."

He locked the door while he lifted the linoleum and a loose piece of board at the corner of the hearth. The gas men had not fixed them properly when they put in the gas fire. After searching for a minute, he found an old pocket-book, banged the dust out of it, took out the money and counted it—eighteen pounds.

"That should do nicely," he considered. "Say there are fifty children . . . Yes; that's all right . . . Now, how to get out? . . . I promised not to escape, but it isn't escaping. I'm coming back again. Of course it's late." He looked at his watch. "Ten past eight. Umph! It's an irregularity, but—— Let me see, what was I when I promised? . . . I was the North Wind. Now I'm not. So that's all right. I'm someone else—Santa Claus, and the Messenger of Peace. So the promise doesn't apply. Besides, I'm not breaking it . . . A man in his life plays many parts! . . . The costume may not be strictly correct, and the harp is not all that it should be, but peace does not dwell in these trappings. It is in the heart—put there by a Higher Power. *I* am the humble messenger to carry it to the world!"

He switched off the light, put up the window softly, and stood there a moment, extending his big arms as if he blessed the troubled world; another moment with folded arms and lowered head, as if he waited for the Almighty's blessing on his mission.

"Now," he said, "I will go."

He dropped his Santa Claus staff gently on the soft ground, lowered his harp as far as he could, and let that fall, too. Then he let himself down from the window-sill by his hands and dropped also. He was a trifle shaken, and rubbed his jolted knees, but not really hurt, being a sturdy, active man, although nearing sixty. He looked older, but that was because his hair had suddenly gone white some two years before. The beard which he grew after that time grew white also.

He gathered up the insignia of his offices and walked quietly through the grounds. He had proposed to climb the fence; but the lodge-keeper was not about, so he passed out through the smaller gate into the lane.

It was a calm night, and warm for the time of year; a damp air, but no rain, though the sky was covered with clouds, and it was very dark. He walked through the village and saw no one; but presently he heard angry voices behind a hedge—a man's voice and a woman's, and occasionally the woman cried. He stepped through an opening near them and approached softly. They were two young rustics, not much more than boy and girl, and they were having a lovers' quarrel, which threatened to be their final disagreement.

"A pack of lies," the youth said, "and yer know it! And yer did it to make the row. That's wot yer did! If yer was a man, I'd smash yer!"

"If yer was a *man*," the girl retorted, "there wouldn't be no row and no occasion. It's the larst time, mind. I'm done with yer!"

"Thank 'Eaven!" cried the man.

"Yer needn't," sobbed the girl. "Thank yerself. Yer done it on purpose. Never cared for me, yer didn't!"

"That's a lie, and yer know. So don't make that excuse. Yer never wanted me—not in yer 'eart."

"I did!" the girl cried. "More fool me! Well, that's neither 'ere nor there. It's off."

"Off," he agreed sullenly.

They drew back a little from each other, the girl gasping and the man drawing heavy breaths—lingered as if unwilling to go.

"Ain't yer no more to say?" the youth asked rather chokily.

"Go!" cried the girl furiously.

Just then a strange, mysterious figure drew near them, looking monstrous in the black night.

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" it announced in a great voice.

"Bill!" the girl cried. "Bill!"

She staggered and nearly fell from fright. The man put his arm round her and

supported her, though he was shaking with fright himself.

"'Tain't nothing," he declared. "I won't let it 'urt yer. 'Ere, come along!" He backed away from the Messenger, almost carrying the girl.

"It's a ghosty!" she wailed. "That's wot it is, an' a judgment on us for quarrelling. I won't never again, nor you, neither. Tell 'im, Bill."

"We won't do it no more, mister," the man said. "'Urry up, Emma! He ain't coming no further. It's all right, mister. Yer needn't trouble after us no more."

The Messenger stopped and watched them stumbling towards a gap in the hedge, with their arms round each other, and raised his voice and sang, thumbing at his speechless harp as though it were a banjo. People always admired John Stacey's singing of quaint old songs, he remembered:

"Since the time is fleeting here
For to find each other dear;
Since a moment passes by
Ev'ry breath and ev'ry sigh;
Since the hand so warm to hold
Must some day be still and cold,
Since the one who cheers your lot,
Called some day will answer not:
Since life's such a little while,
Given you to laugh and smile;
Since whate'er you say or do,
You love her and she loves you!—
Take no idle word amiss
From the lips you love to kiss.
Offer hand and mouth to prove
Th' quarrel but excess of love!"

The Messenger nodded smilingly when he had finished. It was a good song for lovers, he reflected. John Stacey heard it first, he remembered, from a little wife who stole up behind him one evening, when he felt sulky, and put her hands over his eyes and sang it. They had children, and——

"I must *not* let myself think about Stacey," the Messenger told himself. "*I* am the Messenger of Peace, and there is a lot of work to do."

He passed out from the field and walked to the village. Round a sudden corner he came upon the inn. A crowd was streaming out of the door, after two men who were shouting at each other and pulling off their coats to fight. Two weeping women tried hard to dissuade them, but they would not listen to them or to the fat old landlord, who plaintively urged that it was "Christmas-time, mates—Christmas-time," but commenced to square up to each other. And then a tall figure in a red robe held out an arm between them.

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" he cried.

The combatants paused, and the crowd drew back from the newcomer, and some of the women screamed; but gradually there was a titter. Even the two quarrellers grinned.

"It's one of the loonies!" someone shouted.

The Messenger pointed at the combatants.

"Judge, then," he said, "what *they* are!"

There was a roar of laughter at that, and the combatants looked sheepish.

"'E ain't far out, neither," said one of the wives tearfully. "Two grown men behaving like nasty quarrelsome boys!"

"'Ear, 'ear!" cried the other wife.

"You chaps take 'eed," the landlord advised. "He's lost less of 'is senses than you two 'ave."

The two men glanced at each other and at the tall Messenger, and hesitated.

"Friends," he asked them, "what is your quarrel?"

"Just nothing," one wife called. "Our young 'Arry called names at 'is Susan——"

"What ain't six years old, neither of them," the other wife added, "and wiser than their father."

"Does it not seem so, my friends?" the Messenger asked. "Children are sent to soften our hearts, not to harden them."

"Yer mad," one man grumbled.

"No," he replied calmly, "you are mistaken. I am not mad when I am the Messenger of Peace, only when I am a seal or the North Wind, or John Stacey. *He* went mad; but I am not poor Stacey at Christmas-time, only in the spring. That was when the ship went down, with his children—all three children—his little children . . . They had grown big then, but your little children are always your little children to you . . . I am not John Stacey who lost his children, not at Christmas-time. Do not tell me that I am, because *he is mad!*" The staff and harp in his hands shook to and fro.

"No, no!" one of the combatants cried hastily. "Yer ain't 'im, guv'nor. No, no, in course yer ain't. Poor bloke! *All* his kids! . . . Yer ain't 'im, so there's no call to worry. Yer the blooming Messenger of Peace. That's wot *yer* are!"

"Strike me, if yer ain't!" said the second man.

"Then," said the Messenger with dignity, "I command you to shake hands."

The two men grinned slowly and scratched their heads.

"Got us fair!" one owned.



"'Ere, come along!' He backed away from the Messenger."

"And sense in 'im," said the other. "Well, least said soonest mended, mate. I made too much of it. I'll own that."

"I was 'asty," the other admitted

"Shake hands!" the Messenger repeated.

They shook hands, grinning and winking at each other.

"You've got more gumption than anyone 'ere, guv'nor," one observed. "Come and 'ave a drink."

"Thank you," the Messenger acknowledged, "but I must not delay. I have much work to do. There are many who wait for the good tidings. But before I depart I will sing you a little song."

He laid down his staff, and raised the "harp" and plucked at the dumb strings, and sang:

"'Tis the Messenger of Peace
Come to tell
Tidings from the Lord in Heaven—
Ring the bell!
That your sins be all forgiven,
That your happiness increase,
Mark me well!

There be five great things on earth—
Mercy mild;
Work, to prove what life is worth;
Love, and faith to plighted word;
Care for child.
'The last is greatest,' said the Lord—
And He smiled.



"'I am the Messenger of Peace!'"

Ye who long the Lord to please,
Who seek and cannot see His Face—
Hearken ye!
'Are the children in their place
At your knee?
Whoso loveth one of these,
Loveth me!'"

A tear ran down the Messenger's cheek when he had finished.

"The old gent's thinking of his children," someone whispered. "Cruel shame!"

A woman who had her handkerchief out stepped up to him and wiped the tear away.

"Thank you," he acknowledged. "Thank you, madam. You love little children, of course. That man Stacey did, especially his own. He——"

"Yes, yes, sir," she interrupted, "but you ain't 'im. You're the Messenger of Peace. That's what you are! And look a bit like Santa Claus."

"Ah," said the Messenger, "so I do! I am, you know. Mr. Stacey—he's one of my delusions, but there *was* such a man—he had a child named Joan. She was a funny little girl . . . I remember—at least, *he*

does—something that she said when she was very little. 'Daddy! If I was dead and died, and couldn't play and talk, you'd give my Kissmiss to some other little girl, wouldn't you?' . . . I think I might give it for him, as he's mad, poor chap—quite mad!" He found his pocket-book and held out the notes. "This is my own money. It was given to Stacey. If some of you would kindly spend it on Christmas presents for the children of the village? . . . In memory of Joan and her brother and sister? . . . If they had lived—Stacey used to think that perhaps *they* would have little children some day . . . Should you feel any doubt"—he looked at the landlord, whom the others had pushed forward—"you can consult the Superintendent. I do not think he will object. Oh, no!"

So the landlord took the money.

"We'll get the toys to-morrow, sir," the landlord promised, "although the shops is supposed to be closed. *I'll* manage it. You must come and see the children happy with them; and—children *does* misbehave sometimes, sir, the little rascals!—you might say a few words to them, as the Messenger of Peace, or Santa Claus, whichever you like to be!"

"Ah," he said, "to-morrow I shall be the North Wind. I never blow on children. Good night!"

"I'll see you safe home, sir," one of the men who had proposed to fight offered. "You're going back there now, aren't you? It's a good place to live, you know. Very nice gent, the doctor, and 'is wife, too. A pleasant word for anyone, the little lady 'as. They'll treat yer kind."

"Do not be afraid," the Messenger said. "I shall go back all right. I have given my word. But I must go alone. God bless you all."

He held out his arms. There was a hush, and they bowed their heads. When they raised them, he was rounding the bend in the lane, looking about him as if he wanted to find someone. He did. He sought John Stacey.

"*He's* the man who needs me most," he reflected. "When I find him again—I shall on the twenty-seventh of April, anyhow—I must make him sane. Then perhaps his heart—— They said it was weak, and if he hadn't gone mad and forgotten about the children—— Ssh! What's that?"

He saw a faint light from the doorway of a cottage standing back in a field, and heard the sound of voices. From their tone it was evident that the message of peace was required there. So he plodded across the sticky field.

A fierce little old countryman was standing in the doorway, flourishing a thick stick. A gentle little old country-woman was clinging to his arm and trying to soften him. A big, rough-looking young fellow was facing them, with his hands and teeth clenched.

"I tole yer never to show yer face 'ere again!" the old man spluttered.

"Steve!" the old woman implored. "'E never meant——"

But the old man pushed her aside and continued:

"Alwus been able to 'old up my 'ead for sixty year, I bin, and yer drags my name in the muck! Yer no son of mine!"

"Steve!" the old woman wailed. "Steve! 'E's our son, wotever 'e's said an' done—yourn an' mine."

"Yours, mother," the young man said, "and wish you'd had a better. You've a right to complain. But as to *him!* Who kept me short? Who drove me mad, holding me in? Canting old hypocrite!"

"Charlie! Don't, boy! He's your father!"

"Father to a drunken, idle, thievin' blackguard!" the old man roared.

"You lie!" the young man shouted. "*You* were the thief. You had what was mine by rights. Call me a thief again, and I'll cram the word down your lying throat, if you are my father!"

The young man approached a step nearer; the old man raised his stick; the old woman tottered between them.

Then a tall figure entered the cottage gate and stood with outstretched arm, just visible in the shadow of the alder-tree—a vague presence, apparently robed like one of the patriarchs in the big family Bible. "Moses, or Abraham, or one of them good gentlemen," Mrs. Nokes always said, when she told the story. At the moment she took it for a ghost, and cried out and staggered; and her husband and son caught her, one by each arm. They were alike in one thing, at any rate—they both "thought a lot of 'mother.'"

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" the apparition announced in a resounding voice—"something betwixt a trumpet and a parson," old Nokes described it later.

"Who sent you?" the young man asked, with chattering teeth. "I ain't a funk," he told a friend afterwards, "but it dropped

straight out of the alder-tree. Seven or eight feet high, it was."

"The Almighty sent me," the Messenger answered, "in His mercy. He has many to do His bidding. Think if he had sent the dread Messenger of Death!"

"They didn't mean no 'arm, sir," the old woman pleaded. "If you've got to take anybody, take me. I ain't much use to anyone!"

"*She* ain't done nothing," said the old man. "I'll answer for wot's wrong!"

"'Tain't mother's doing," the son asserted. "You can put it down to me."

"No," the old man cried, "I take the blame! Leave my son alone. 'E's—'e's young, and——"

"Friends," the Messenger called, "God chose the Messenger of *Peace*. He sends you good, not ill, this blessed Christmas-time. Life is short. There is no time for strife. Join hands and quarrel no more. Bear with each other. Be good to *her* . . . Peace be with you all!"

The spirit—so they agree to call it—vanished through the gate. It seemed to grow bigger and bigger in the darkness, and then it was gone.

"I've no patience with them as make out it was an old loony escaped," old Nokes says. "Parson and doctor together never talked as good sense. It were a sperrit, orl right. Same as made it up between Bill and Emma in Farmer Smith's field, I've no doubt. An' we took it to 'eart accordin'. Young chaps must be young, as I should have thought without tellin'."

Mrs. Nokes agrees that it was a "sperrit," and talked sense, but she fancies that the sperrit was "Moses or one of them."

Young Nokes argues that it was what the schoolmaster calls a "fantasy"; but, anyhow, he says, it was a call to him to steady down and look after the old folks, who "ain't quite so young as they were."

So the Messenger achieved his object.

He wandered about for some time, but found no work to do. So he turned his steps towards the asylum. It was ten o'clock, and he knew that he might change into the North Wind at any time after midnight. If he was out then, he would blow away from the asylum! Besides, he wanted time to sew the sheets down. When the North Wind was strong, they got thrown off the bed, and he had to keep getting up and blowing them on again.

He met no one until he was in Asylum Lane, about a couple of hundred yards from the house. Then he noticed a small old gentleman approaching him. Just as he was near, two big tramps sprang upon the old fellow from behind a tree.

"'And over and don't make no noise," one growled, "and sharp about it! Yer'd best."

The old chap hit out pluckily, and tried to shout; but the tramps easily overpowered him, and put his coat over his head to stifle his cries. They were proceeding to rifle his pockets, when a strange form in a red robe arrived upon the scene.

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" he shouted, and he brought his staff down upon the backs of the tramps in turn.

They released the old farmer hastily and drew back a bit, staring at the new arrival. They were evidently startled. The farmer was even more so. For, after beginning to thank his rescuer, he caught sight of him, and then he stopped short in his speech and ran. The tramps were going after him, but the newcomer stood in their way.

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" he roared.

"'E's one of them loonies, Alf," the bigger tramp pronounced, with the addition of some shocking language. "Down 'im!"

"I'll give yer peace!" the other threatened, also with unnecessary and unpleasant language.

They both set upon the Messenger, and there was a violent and unpeaceful fight. They were all down several times. The Messenger broke his staff over one of them, and half the strings of his harp over the other. His cloak was torn in many places; again and again he heard it go "r-r-rip!" Then he used his fists. "It's a pity I'm not John Stacey," he thought. "He was a boxer in his young days." However, he soon proved too much for the tramps. Possibly the blows which broke the staff and the harp had taken most of the fight out of them.

"Blimey!" one said, rubbing his cheek. "They've got the strength of ten, them mad chaps. Yah! Loony!"

"You lie!" the Messenger cried, and advanced upon them again. "I am the Messenger of Peace!"

They backed away from him.

"Best 'ook it, Jim," the second man advised the first. "If the —— swab fancies 'e's War, 'e'll kill us."

They ran to the stile and got over it, with a little help from the Messenger, and

rushed away over the fields. So he returned and picked up the broken staff and the harp, and drew his cloak together as well as he could, and made his way into the asylum.

The gate was open, and no one noticed him go in. He was congratulating himself upon the complete success of his mission and thinking that the good work was its own reward, and that it would be mere vanity to seek praise by mentioning his deeds to the Superintendent, when he arrived under his window. Then it suddenly occurred to him that there was no way of climbing up to it.

"Dear, dear!" he muttered. "*Now* I understand why Peace has wings! I must tell the Chief to order them as well as the harp. And I shall require a new staff . . . Umph! That will be rather difficult to explain—how I broke the staff. You have to beat peace into some people. How Stacey would have enjoyed seeing me tackle those scoundrels! *He'd* have understood; but the Superintendent—— He's a good fellow, but he has fads about bounds, and hours, and all that sort of thing. Umph! I think I shall suggest to the porter that he need not mention my absence to him."

The porter unfortunately did not feel able to adopt the suggestion.

"I understand as you're the Messenger of Peace, Mr. Santa Claus," he said, "but that don't account for your fighting—which it's plain you've been—or the state you're in. That nice new cloak, too, to say nothing of the missus's clothes-horse!"

"It is not a clothes-horse," the Messenger declared; "it's a harp; and, if you'll listen, I'll explain everything."

"You'd best explain it to the Superintendent, sir," the man said. "Come this way, please."

The Superintendent was in the midst of an animated discussion with his wife—he had just termed her "a little shrew"—when the servant announced that No. 5 had broken bounds and been out fighting, and had just come in.

"Oh," he said wearily, "show him in. That's your precious friend Santa Claus. He's about as reasonable as *you!* He wants a harp now! . . . I don't know which gives me more trouble, you or the patients!"

"If you treat them like you treat me," she flared, stamping her little foot, "I don't wonder that they give you trouble. You nasty, disagreeable, fidgety thing! I hate you! And, of course, *they* do!"

The Superintendent smiled a little.

"They don't, you know," he told her. "Neither do you . . . Never mind, kid. You've a naughty little temper, but——"

"I haven't!" she cried. "It's you who have the temper. I wish I'd never seen you. I wish——" The door opened. "Good Heavens! Oh, Mr.—Santa Claus!"

Santa Claus bowed and advanced towards them. His red cloak hung in tatters, he was hatless, and had cuts and bruises on his face, and was plastered all over with mud, which made his white beard iron-grey. In his left hand he held two pieces of staff; in his right he had the clothes-horse, the disappearance of which cook had reported. A number of broken pieces of string dangled from it. Nevertheless, his walk was stately and his demeanour unabashed. He had caught the sound of jangling, and he had his work to do.

"I am the Messenger of Peace," he announced in his deep, resounding voice. "At my coming all quarrels cease."

He looked commandingly from one to the other, and beckoned them together.

"Ah!" said the Superintendent. "Umph! Ye-es!" He glanced at his pretty little wife, trying hard not to laugh. "But, really, you know——"

"That's my clothes-horse!" his wife cried. "Oh, Santa Claus!"

"Pardon me, dear lady," the big man said, "but for the moment—just for the moment—it is a harp. And I—unworthy though I be—I am the Messenger of Peace! None to-night have been able to resist my influence. I am about to try it on a more difficult subject."

"Do!" the little lady cried. "Try it on *him!*" She pointed to her husband.

The Messenger smiled at her.

"And you?" he asked, speaking like a father to his children. "And *you?* . . . Tut, tut! You don't need my help. Just go and touch his hand . . . Young people who love each other—eh?"

Somehow the Superintendent and his wife found themselves foolishly holding hands at the command of the tattered and damaged Messenger.

"God bless you," he said, "and keep you always dear to each other . . . There was a man once who had a little wife rather like you, my child. She died years ago—many years. His heart might have broken then, but she told him to be brave and live for the children. His name was Stacey. It was their name, too, of course . . . Of course! . . . They went for a sea trip . . ."

The little wife darted to him and cuddled his arm.

"You are not poor Mr. Stacey to-night," she declared. "No, no! You are the Messenger of Peace . . . You really *are*."

"Yes," he agreed. "I know, I know. That is why I want to find him to-night. To-morrow I shall be the North Wind, and——"

"No, no," the Superintendent interrupted. "You must remain the Messenger of Peace until the harp arrives—the proper one. You are doing so well at it. It is just the—the profession for you."

"A noble one!" the little lady declared enthusiastically. "You have done such good work to-night, you know. You must tell us all about it—when Harry has seen to your face. And you'll like to wash, perhaps? Then you must come and talk to us. Perhaps I shall want pacifying again! I need a *lot* of it, don't I, Harry? *Do* see to his poor face, and bring him back to tell us everything."

The Messenger protested doubtfully that there was the bedding to sew down, and Mr. Stacey to find, before he blew. But the Superintendent and his wife promised that an attendant should secure the bedding—although he *wasn't* going to turn into the North Wind, but to wait for the harp—and that there was plenty of time to find Stacey (which he fancied they did not consider very desirable). So he consented to have his face attended to, and washed, and dressed in ordinary clothes—an anachronism, he remarked, but they were by themselves, "and *you* both know who I am."

To all outward appearance he was a big, sensible, humorous English gentleman, somewhere about sixty, when he re-entered the drawing-room. He had an easy paternal manner with his host and hostess, and he seemed "so dreadfully sane," she whispered to her husband, to whom she sat close. The Messenger said that they needn't mind him. "There is nothing pleasanter," he remarked, "to a kind old man—and I hope I'm that—than to see young people fond of each other."

They placed him in the biggest armchair, and gave him cigarettes and a whisky-and-soda, and he told them his adventures of the evening. He even sang the songs to show how they went, accompanying himself on the piano. He was quite alive to the humorous side of the business, they found.

"What did it matter who I was, or where I came from," he asked, "so long as they listened to me? The message is everything, and the messenger nothing. Wisdom may even sound wiser from the mouth of a child or of a lunatic . . . In a way I *am* . . . In a way I am not. That is what people do not understand . . . Again, take the harp. Was it any worse for being a dummy? If it had been real, I can't play one! Or anything properly. Of course, I can strum on the piano, but my wife and children always played my accompaniments. They——" He paused suddenly. "I'm mixing myself up with John Stacey," he said. "I—I wonder who I am?"

"The Messenger of Peace," the Superintendent asserted confidently. "You have proved it. If I were you, I should keep to that. You have all the qualifications for the part."

"A kind heart," the Superintendent's wife said, "and a fine presence, and a beautiful voice. I should like to hear you sing accompanied by the harp."

"You must learn it," the Superintendent advised. "It undoubtedly assists in your work, and there are many people who are waiting for the message of peace."

"There's *Harry*," the little lady cried, shaking her husband's arm. "You can come to him once a fortnight, when he's a bear, and"—she laughed brightly—"once a week to me!"

"Ah," said the Messenger, "not so often, not so often. If you ceased to be a naughty little wife, he wouldn't like you so much. *You* don't need me . . . There are others——" His face worked. "There are those who are not at peace with themselves—those whose hearts are bursting with anger, those whose hearts are bursting with grief. I must find *them*. They need me most . . . There is that man Stacey!" He sprang to his feet. "I must find him. He is close to me. I can feel him near to-night." He groped round and round with his arms.

"Get him to sing, Jessie. Anything," the Superintendent whispered. "His heart is queer, irregular. If he came to himself, it might kill him."

The Superintendent's wife took the restless hands gently in hers.

"Sing me one more song," she begged. "A little carol, something about Christmas, something happy . . . Isn't there anything about—about everything coming right?"

"Everything—coming—right," he said slowly. "Yes . . . yes . . . But that

isn't *here*, my dear . . . He's got to go to . . . the place where *they* have gone . . . Up there!" He stared at the ceiling, laughed suddenly, held up his hands. "Hullo!" he said. "Little missus! Where are the kids? . . . There you are, you young rascals! . . . Molly . . . Jack . . . Joan . . . There's a boat, and I'll soon be across . . . Stacey will bring me."

He turned quickly to the Superintendent and his wife.

"I know where to find him," he said. "You won't mind, because . . . You are very good to me!"

He put his hand on the Superintendent's shoulder for a moment, bent and kissed his wife on the forehead.

"God bless you," he said. "I have found—myself!"

He strode across the room to the mantelshelf, pointed to his image in it, then threw out his arms.

"I am the Messenger of Peace!" he cried in a voice that made the room ring . . . And then he swayed. The Superintendent caught him . . . No, not *him*, only the empty house that for a little while sheltered the Messenger of Peace.

THE HOLLY FAIR.

THE little holly of the moors
In hunter's green is clad;
She's russet-gaitered to her knees,
With skirt of heather plaid;
And beads of scarlet-red she wears—
Ay, round red beads, such as you please
To buy at gipsy hopping-fairs;
Though daylight wan soon passes on,
And all the heath grows sad.

The little holly of the moors
Holds Fair across the ice;
Her stalls of green, her open doors
Show many a quaint device—
Moor-magic mirrors; cabochons red;
A scroll in runic lettering
To scan before you go to bed;
Bird-notes of the heather a-tune together,
And a starlight-silver ring.

Would you in moor-stream mirror look,
Or wear the starlight ring,
Or hear the birds of the heather sing,
Or read the Holly Book?
Nay, see you there! With scarce a sound,
The wild moor ponies troop in sight,
Roan, chestnut, dapple-grey and white,
All bound for the Christmas Merry-Go-Round!
And the Fair begins to-night!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

By HAROLD BINDLOSS

ILLUSTRATED BY E. H. SHEPARD

MOSSCROP, recently owner of the Redbank cotton mills and now of Mireside estate in the North, felt he had some grievances, and one Monday morning sent for his gamekeeper. Looking out from the terrace on Sunday afternoon, he had seen with his glasses a number of people scattered about the big peat moss. When Mosscrop gave a good price for Mireside and the shooting and fishing rights, he imagined all he bought was his, but he had begun to doubt. In fact, it looked as if the plain business rules of Lancashire were not used in Cumberland.

Part of the peat moss was an ancient common, on which farmers had grazing rights called *stints*, there were complicated manorial laws, and Mosscrop's solicitor refused to state exactly how far he was entitled to order people off his property. On fine Sundays, when the tide was low, adventurous excursionists from a little town crossed the sands and wandered about the moss, looking for gulls' eggs. Mosscrop did not want the gulls' eggs, but was persuaded the excursionists robbed the grouses' nests.

Moreover, a path went up the waterside and round the fir woods to Lanthwaite Hall, some distance off, and Mosscrop had resolved to stop the path. He declared it *invited* poachers to net the pools at night when the sea-trout were running, and expected Liddel of Lanthwaite's support. Liddel, knowing the moor folk better than Mosscrop, refused to help, and when Mosscrop erected barbed wire his men pulled the obstruction down. Mosscrop hated to be baffled, and Liddel was stubborn. A Parliamentary election brought about another jar, and when they afterwards met at the court-house in the market town Liddel did not know Mosscrop. All the same, Beatrice Mosscrop was Miss Liddel's friend, and Mosscrop imagined she had gone to Lanthwaite on Sunday afternoon. This annoyed him, but there was not much use in arguing with Beatrice; he had sometimes tried.

When the gamekeeper came to the gun-room, Mosscrop remarked: "Yesterday the confounded Newtown shopkeepers were all over the moss again. Why don't you keep them off?"

"I'll not can, sir," the gamekeeper replied.

"Then it looks as if you don't know your job. If you let the trippers steal the eggs, how do you expect to keep up a proper head of grouse?"

"It's the black gulls' eggs they come for."

"If you are satisfied about this, I am not," Mosscrop rejoined. "Last autumn the bag was very poor, and the sporting friends I brought down made remarks. If it's poor again, Davies, I'll get another keeper. I think that's all."

Davies went off in a thoughtful mood. On the whole, Mosscrop was a good master, and Davies wanted to stop. A gamekeeper's post, however, has drawbacks. One must not go farther than the law allows, and although country magistrates are not, as a rule, fastidious, one cannot convict a poacher without some evidence. All the same, one must keep enough game to give one's employer good sport, particularly when he fills his house with friends from town. Sometimes the duties clash, but Davies did know his job.

A week afterwards Norman Liddel brought his friend Ruthven to Mireside Moss on the carrier of his motor-bicycle. Norman did not live at Lanthwaite, but, since he met Beatrice Mosscrop, came home for two

or three days when this was possible. Ruthven came from an Edinburgh hospital, wore spectacles, and was a keen naturalist. British birds were his particular study, and he wanted a few black-backed gulls' eggs. The lesser black-back, which is a large bird, makes its rude nest on Mireside Moss, and, Davies was persuaded, was accountable for the death of numerous young grouse. In fact, Davies thought the gulls more destructive than the trippers. His employer, however, did not, and one did not argue with Mosscrop.

The boisterous wind had dropped; the afternoon was calm and the sun was hot. In the distance, rugged fells cut the serene sky, and wide, wet sands, lonely heath, and scattered woods were touched by dazzling light. For a few hours a strange tranquillity brooded over the flat holms that run back to the mountains from the stormy firth.

After they left the bicycle in a barn, Liddel and Ruthven pushed laboriously across the moss. Ploughing through tangled heather and jumping sheep drains is strenuous work; there were bogs in which one's feet sank, and Ruthven's occupation had not made him hard. By and by he stopped, wiped his hot face, and hung his jacket on a willow branch.

"There's nobody about to meddle with my coat. I'll pick it up when we come back," he said.

So far as he could see, nobody was about. The heath, broken by dark peat-hags, rolled back into the distance, fading from brown to blue. In the foreground shallow pools glimmered with dazzling reflections, and belts of wet moss shone like emeralds. The young birch leaves, falling in sprays about the silver trunks, were luminously green. A curlew's nesting cry struck strange and melancholy notes, and circling plover called. All else was very quiet, but people were about. Davies, the gamekeeper, carrying a field-glass, occupied a peat stack, and Beatrice Mosscrop stood in the shadow of some willows. The gamekeeper's movements had excited her curiosity.

Ruthven took from his jacket a japanned box, and, trying to put it in his trousers pocket, found it too big.

"What's that for?" Liddel asked.

"Carrying eggs," said Ruthven, pressing a spring that lifted the lid. "When you put them in the clips, they can't get broken. Rather a good notion? I designed the thing."

"I thought it was for sandwiches. When I was a bird's-nester, I carried eggs in my hat. How many eggs do you want?"

"The box holds a dozen, but if I could get six black-backs', I'd be satisfied. Some of my friends are naturalists, and in Scotland the lesser black-back generally makes its nest on rocks you can't get at."

"Then we had better start. Since I don't expect you want *clockit* eggs, and the black-back only lays two or three, we must rob a number of nests in order to get them fresh. I don't know much about the Wild Birds' Act. Do you?"

"Nobody but the bill-stickers bothers about the Act; it's possible they study the posters they put up," Ruthven remarked, and they set off.

Beatrice Mosscrop saw them go, but when they vanished behind the whinns and Davies came out from the peat-stack, he did not see her. Miss Mosscrop was a sportswoman, and knew the advantage of standing still; moreover, her soft-coloured dress melted into the shady background. Davies went up to Ruthven's jacket, took something from the pocket, went away for a time, and, returning, put something back. The puzzle was there, because Beatrice imagined that people who searched another's clothes kept all they found. Then Davies looked about and started for a cottage on the edge of the moss. Miss Mosscrop pondered, and set off for home.

Ruthven found a redshank's nest and put an egg in his hat; when he found a curlew's, he took another. After Liddel found some black-backs' nests, Ruthven's hat was getting full, and Liddel was forced to help. Now it looked as if eggs were numerous, Ruthven was not satisfied with six. He said he was not often lucky, and was president of a naturalists' club. For all that, since wild-fowl use a hollow in the ground, to find their nests is hard, and when Ruthven had got all he wanted, some time had gone, and he was tired.

Lying in a clump of fern, he lighted a cigarette. Liddel occupied a fallen birch trunk and looked about. All was quiet, but for the soft splash of water and the buzzing of flies. The birch leaves were motionless; a distant wood floated like a mirage above the quivering reflections on the edge of the moor. For all that, Liddel thought somebody was about. There was a movement in the whinns on the top of a rise, and at another spot he imagined the dry bents waved. After a few moments he was satisfied, and began to weigh the

situation. He was trespassing, and if he were caught, Mosscrop would have some grounds for complaint. All the same, he thought he would like to give the gamekeepers a run, and to see his sober companion dodging about among the peat-hags would be something of a joke. Liddel was young and marked by a freakish humour.

"I think we'll get off," he said.

"Why do you want to get off?"

"Mosscrop's gamekeeper and another fellow are crawling in the grass. I reckon they are looking for us."

Ruthven said he would stop and argue with the keeper. He had taken nothing of Mosscrop's.



"'Give me the gulls' eggs.'"

"I imagine the eggs are his, and there's no right-of-way across the moss on this side of the wire fence. Then he and my father are not friendly, and Mosscrop's a quarrelsome old fellow. Anyhow, I'm going. If you stop, the keeper will demand the eggs."

Ruthven meant to keep the eggs, and followed Liddel along the edge of a belt of whinns, up a muddy sheep drain, and across some wet peat-hags. They saw nobody, but Liddel was not cheated. When one's clothes harmonise with the background, a very small object will hide one's figure, and a gamekeeper knows how to keep out of sight. Liddel knew, and led his companion across the roughest ground he could find, but at length they stopped for breath behind a heap of drying peats. Some distance off, Ruthven's jacket hung on the willows.

"There's a good line down a sheep drain to the road," Liddel remarked. "I expect the other fellows have seen your jacket, and reckon we'll pick it up. D'you mind if we steal off along the drain and leave them to watch the thing?"

"I do mind. I want my egg-box, and there's a letter in the pocket I wouldn't like strangers to read. Besides, the envelope's addressed to Lanthwaite."

"Then we must get the jacket; we don't want Mosscrop to know where you are stopping. Well, since the ground is open, speed's important. The man who reaches the jacket first mustn't wait for the other."

They started, and Ruthven kept up with Liddel until they came to the deep drain. Liddel jumped and got across; Ruthven jumped and fell.

"Crawl down the drain!" Liddel shouted, and went on.

Perhaps it was ridiculous to run, but the joke was not as good as he had thought. Liddel knew something about gamekeepers, and imagined the fellow who had got help and hunted him across the moss would not do so for nothing. Anyhow, he must get Ruthven's jacket and reach the barn where his motor-bicycle was. If he could start her before the others arrived, he could pick up Ruthven on the road.

He reached the willows, but as he seized the jacket a man jumped out, and he saw Davies leap the ditch. Liddel swerved and, setting his mouth, ran his best; Davies was not going very fast, and perhaps he could shake off the other. It looked as if he were doing so, but when he got to the barn and wheeled out his bicycle, the engine would not start. Running desperately alongside, he heard a welcome thud. She was going, but when he jumped for the saddle, a man broke through the hedge. The front wheel ran between his legs, he shouted, and he and the machine and Liddel went down.

The man was up first, and, dragging Liddel to his feet, held him for a few moments until Davies arrived. The gamekeeper seized Ruthven's jacket and took out the box. He opened the lid, and Liddel saw the box was neatly packed with grouses' eggs. None were broken.

"Got you this time!" Davies remarked. "You'll come to Mireside, and we'll see what Mr. Mosscrop has t' say aboot it."

Liddel saw his joke was very bad, and something must be risked.

"Very well, if I've got to go; but it's some distance, and we have had a run. Get up on the carrier, and I'll drive you to the house."

"I reckon we'll *walk*," the keeper rejoined. "Mayhappen you'd drive me into the ditch."

They set off, and presently overtook two other men who escorted Ruthven along the road. Ruthven was hot, dusty, and savage.

"I can't persuade the fools they'll be sorry for this," he said.

"In the meantime they look pretty satisfied," Liddel remarked. "All the odd-jobbers on the Mireside estate, I think! Mosscrop must imagine you're a desperate fellow!"

When they reached Mireside, Liddel was relieved to note that Miss Mosscrop was not about. A rather fat, red-faced gentleman occupied the top of the steps and studied the prisoners with stern satisfaction.

"Put them in the gunroom, Davies, and send Wilson to Broadwath for the police," he said.

"I expect you know you have no authority to meddle with us. You are not a policeman," Ruthven remarked.

"I am a magistrate," said Mosscrop, and signed to Davies, who pushed his captives up some stairs and into a small room.

"Mr. Mosscrop will talk to you after dinner," he said, and locked the door.

Liddel went to the window and shook his head. "Too high to jump, and I don't see a pipe. I think the old fellow's spiteful, and the circumstantial evidence is pretty good. Then I'll admit our looks are against us."

He was dusty, and bits of grass and heather stuck to his clothes. Ruthven had no jacket, and the eggs in his hat had broken. Some that Liddel carried were whole, but not all.

"Let's take a smoke and try to find a plan," he resumed. "I don't altogether see our defence. In fact, if Mosscrop means to

annoy my father, I rather think he's got his chance."

Soon after he had smoked his cigarette a key jarred in the lock, and he jumped up with a red face when Beatrice Mosscrop came in. She looked surprised, but her eyes twinkled. Part of Beatrice Mosscrop's charm was her humour. She looked very attractive in her dinner dress, and Liddel tried to brace himself.

"I heard Davies had caught somebody stealing grouses' eggs, and was curious," she said. "For one thing, I hadn't seen a poacher."

"Now you see two, I wonder whether you are disappointed!" Liddel replied. "But I don't think you know Mr. Ruthven. He's, so to speak, an amateur. This is his first experiment."

"I'm not a poacher at all!" Ruthven declared. "Norman brought me to the moor to look for black-gulls' nests."

He was very sober, and Beatrice thought Liddel disturbed, although he played up well.

"But why did Davies bother you?" she asked.

"I imagine he means to claim my friend stole a boxful of grouses' eggs."

"The thing is ridiculous!" Ruthven exclaimed. "I left the empty box in my pocket."

"It wasn't empty not long since. The keeper knows his job."

Beatrice pondered. The situation was awkward, and, if her father were obstinate, might get worse, but she began to see a light.

"Did you find some gulls' eggs? Have you got them now?" she asked.

"I've got some of mine," said Liddel. "Ruthven has obviously broken his."

Ruthven coloured, and Beatrice, glancing at his head, laughed frankly, but after a few moments she knitted her brows.

"The thing is rather humorous, but it must be stopped. My father's angry, and sometimes he's very firm."

"Mine's peppery," said Liddel. "On the whole, the advantages of stopping the thing are plain. The trouble is, I don't see——"

"What is Mr. Ruthven's box like?" Beatrice asked.

Ruthven told her, and she smiled. "Davies really ought not to have left the box about, and my father sometimes takes things for granted. Perhaps he ought to have examined the evidence before he locked you up." Then she turned to Liddel. "Well, if I clear your friend's character, you must use some tact. Father is not humorous, and I rather think his feeling some resentment is justified. Give me the gulls' eggs."

She went off, and some time afterwards a man-servant and Davies took Liddel and Ruthven to the library. Mosscrop, looking grim and important, occupied a big chair.

"I want your names and occupations," he said.

Ruthven stated his, and Mosscrop looked surprised.

"If this is a joke, it will count against you."

"It is not at all a joke!" Ruthven declared, and Mosscrop, hesitating for a moment, turned to Liddel.

Liddel told him who he was, and Mosscrop frowned. "I expect your father will get a jar, but I don't understand why you stole the grouses' eggs, unless your object was to annoy me."

"I expect the jar will not be my father's," Liddel rejoined. "For one thing, I doubt if your locking us up is justified, but we'll let this go. We did not steal your grouses' eggs. The eggs we got were gulls'."

Mosscrop's smile was rather grim. "Unluckily, the evidence does not support your statement, but it ought to satisfy my fellow-magistrates."

"Circumstantial evidence has drawbacks," Liddel remarked.

Mosscrop signed to the gamekeeper. "Bring the box!"

In a minute or two Davies returned, and Mosscrop asked Ruthven: "Is this your jacket?"

"Of course," said Ruthven angrily. "D'you imagine my habit's to go about half dressed?"

"Your habits are not important. Is this box yours?"

"It is mine. All the same, if it holds grouses' eggs, I did not put them in."

"And I should be much surprised," said Liddel cheerfully.

Mosscrop hesitated. Something about Liddel's smile disturbed him, but he was obstinate, and the young fellow's father had been rude.

"The box contains grouses' eggs, or it does not," he said, pulling at the lid.

"Press the spring and banish the doubt!" Liddel replied.

Mosscrop pressed the spring, and the lid flew open. The box was half empty, but

the clips occupied held black-gulls' eggs. Mosscrop's face got red, and he turned to the gamekeeper.

"What is the meaning of this?"

"I can't say, sir," stammered Davies. "The box *was* full o' grouses' eggs. I ought to know."

"I think he ought," said Liddel meaningly. "Unless, of course—but he *looked* sober."

Mosscrop indicated the door. "You can go, Davies. If you have not a satisfactory explanation, you will go for good."

Davies vanished, and for a few moments Mosscrop was quiet. Then he said frankly: "I'm puzzled; the man is not a fool. It's obvious somebody has cheated me. The gulls' eggs, of course, are not important. Well, if you will indicate the line you think I ought to take——"

"Perhaps the proper line is for us to let it go, sir," said Liddel, with a smile. "I have got some amusement, Ruthven has got his gulls' eggs, and Davies a useful lesson. If you can stop his talking about the little misunderstanding——"

"I'll engage to stop his talking," Mosscrop replied.

"Very well," said Liddel, "I think we are all satisfied. However, now I have met you, I'd like to state that my father had good grounds for not meddling with the right-of-way along the waterside. Perhaps he is rather peppery, but I think you'll find him a very good sort. Suppose you come over to Lanthwaite and see our plan for staking the sea-trout pools so that nets cannot be used?"

Mosscrop looked at him hard. Liddel had taken the proper line, but it was obvious he could take another. Then he was an attractive young fellow, and perhaps his father was better than one thought. Beatrice had gone to Lanthwaite, and she was fastidious. Mosscrop wondered——

"I'll come," he said, and a few days afterwards he went.

WINTER'S DAY.

A VOICE of hedgeside water,
A tired song of reeds,
And a wind in the branches
That blusters and recedes—
Bean-blossom and clover,
Now their course is run.
Autumn's self is over,
Over and done.

Autumn, berried Autumn,
Cease now and part!
Time has touched her beauty
And Death her heart.
Yuletide and snowtide,
And a waning of the sun—
Autumn's self is over,
Over and done.

ERIC CHILMAN.

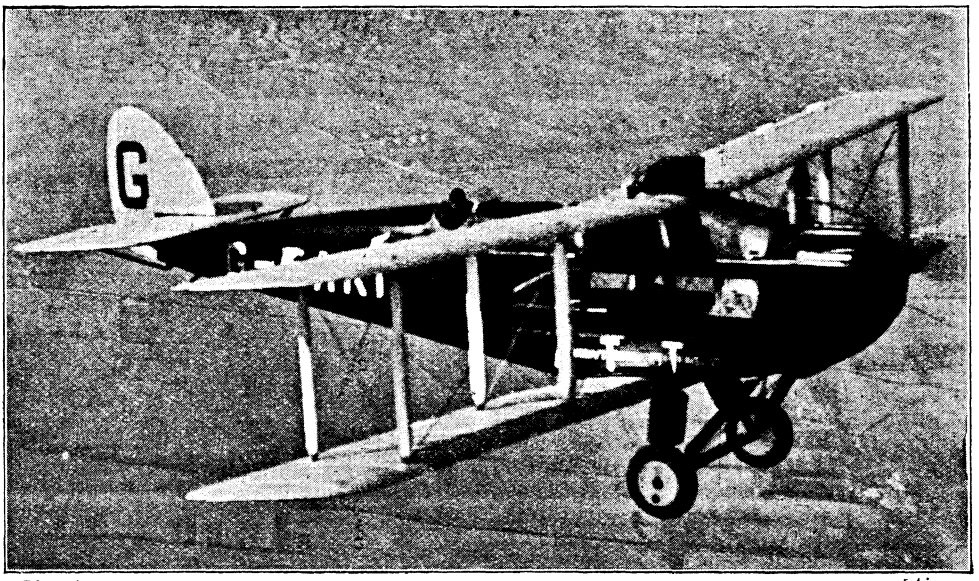


Photo by] [*Airco.*

TWO MILES A MINUTE.

One of the latest-type "expresses" on the London-Paris airway in flight at about 125 miles an hour. This photograph was taken from another aeroplane.

THE WORLD'S AIRWAYS

TIME, NOT DISTANCE, NOW THE GAUGE OF A JOURNEY: THE TRADE WINDS OF THE UPPER AIR

By HARRY HARPER,

Technical Secretary of the Civil Aerial Transport Committee

THE subject of aerial transport grows daily more fascinating, and, as General Seely reminds us, the development of high-speed airways, with all they imply in quickening communication between nations, is perhaps the most important question now before the world. Travel for thousands of miles by air is a new idea—an idea full of hope; an idea which should be the corner-stone of our great house of friendly nations. Never in history, as those who study it agree, has there been an idea more worth working for. The ancient Romans owed much of their success to their early mastery of transport and to their wonderful system of land highways. The people of to-day can wield a power almost unbelievable if they concentrate upon the development of the great commercial highways of the air.

Much already is being done. After flying in all weathers between London and Paris, carrying passengers, mails, and goods, the service of aeroplane "expresses" has recently finished its first year of daily operation; and, besides averaging throughout a speed as great as 100 miles an hour, these aeroplanes were able to complete—in spite of rain, hail, sleet, fog, mist, and snow—as many as 1,448 of their 1,535 scheduled flights, which represents a reliability of slightly more than 94 per cent. It is claimed, therefore, with justification, that the aeroplane is now a dependable vehicle

for a super-express form of transport which is impossible on land or sea.

Already there are several air services each way daily between London and Paris. Daily planes fly also to Brussels and Amsterdam. During eighteen recent weeks some 3,500 travellers used these Continental airways; and there is much prestige for up-to-date men or women who can point on their handbags to one of the bright red and yellow luggage labels which indicate that an aerial journey has been made between London and the Continent. An air-fare of ten guineas between London and Paris is paid willingly by passengers who are in haste. By aeroplane they make in two hours a journey which, by boat and train, would occupy nine or ten hours. As an instance of the progress being made in the design and construction of passenger aeroplanes, it may be mentioned that one "express" placed recently on the London-Paris service, a machine driven by a motor developing 450 horse-power, will carry eight passengers and a pilot at a speed as great as 130 miles an hour. The passengers sit in luxurious armchair seats in an enclosed draught-proof saloon with side windows, and the noise of the engine has been so silenced that conversation is easily possible.

Instances now abound of the practical value to business men of the daily "air expresses," but one can find space for only two of the most striking. A London man summoned urgently to Paris by cable flew there so quickly that he was able to bring off a £3,000 deal which he would have just missed had he been one hour later. Another business man, while he was shaving in his Paris hotel, was handed a cable telling him that some property he had his eye on was coming up for sale unexpectedly in London that same afternoon. He just managed to catch the next aeroplane away, and was in London in time to bid for and buy the site he coveted.

Greatly reduced in price, and becoming a more familiar convenience, the Continental aerial mail is now used regularly as a time-saver by the business world. By paying an air mail and express delivery fee which amounts to only 8*d.* over and above the ordinary postage, you can dispatch a letter at 2 p.m. in London which will be delivered in Paris that same evening. Express goods traffic by air is growing also. Large consignments for aeroplane transport are accepted now at rates as low as 1*s.* a pound, and thanks to the speed of the airway, added to the promptitude with which goods can be cleared through the Customs offices at the air-ports, the saving of time with air-borne cargoes is not merely a question of hours, but often of days.

Airway extensions and connections now in process of development will bring

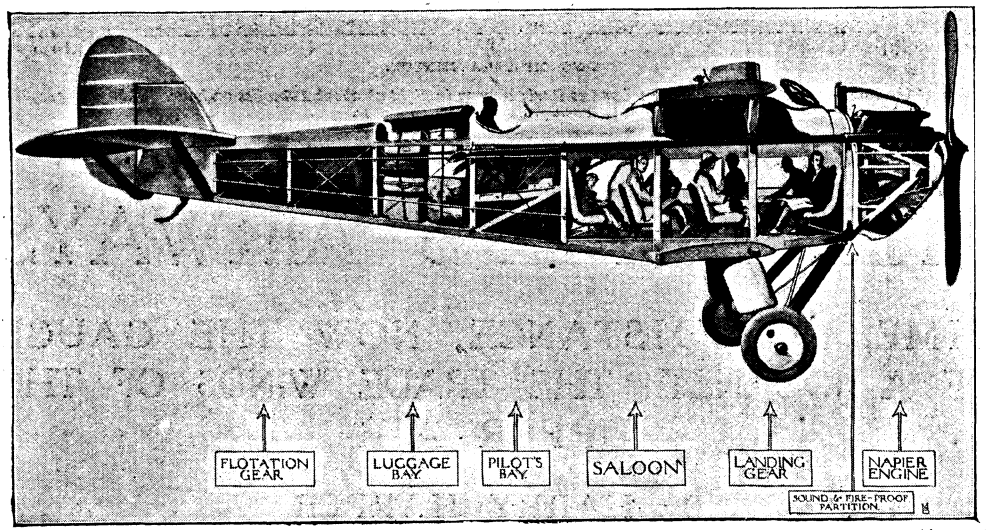
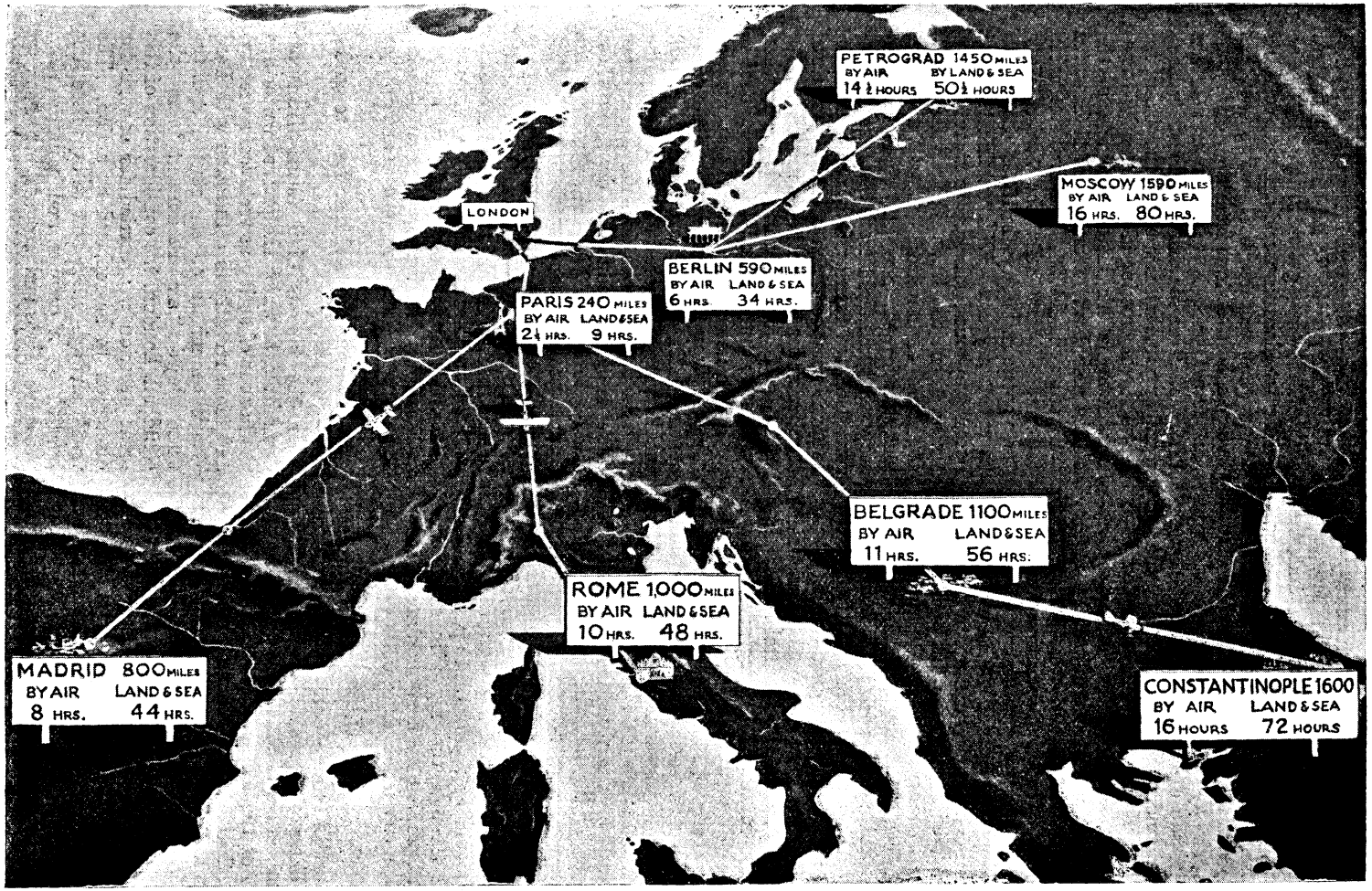


Photo by] [*Airco.*

HOW AN "AIR EXPRESS" IS BUILT.

The picture above, which is self-explanatory, shows the details of construction of the D.H. 18 London-Paris "air express," which, with one engine of 450 horse-power, carries a pilot and eight passengers at a cruising or average speed as high as 108 miles an hour.



SHRINKING EUROPE. BY GEOFFREY WATSON.

Capitals abroad are becoming as near London, from the point of view of the time taken by 100-miles-an-hour airways, as are great cities in the Midlands and the North when the journey is made by railway. This map shows the time taken to travel by air from London to eight of the great cities on the Continent; and, to obtain a comparison, the land-and-sea journey times are also stated. With the exception of Paris and Berlin, these latter figures are pre-War times.

Copenhagen and Berlin within an easy day's journey of London. Already, thanks to an air-mail route *viâ* Hamburg and Amsterdam, a letter posted in Copenhagen at 8.45 a.m. is delivered in London during the afternoon of the next day. The continuance of the airway system beyond Paris will soon provide direct communication by air between London and cities such as Rome and Madrid, while the French authorities hope that by next summer there will be a through route as far as Constantinople. When this service is working, and others have been started, flying will be in operation over about 13,000 miles of European airways.

What is now aimed at is to organise these European air routes for flying by night as well as day. To this end, notably at our London air-port, experiments are now being conducted with aerial light-houses and systems for illuminating an aerodrome so that pilots can land safely at night-time. Regular night-flying along these airways will be specially valuable in accelerating the Continental mails. Instead, for instance, of being several days in transit by boat and train, the mails for such a city as Rome will be taken up at nightfall in a large weight-carrying aeroplane, and, after having been borne through the darkness at twice the speed of an express train, will be ready actually for delivery in Rome by the following morning. The next development, after this, will be the provision of large specially-designed aeroplanes which will take the form of aerial sleeping-cars, in which business men, leaving, say, London at 9 p.m. or 10 p.m., will be carried through the night in safety and comfort, waking up next morning at some European city hundreds of miles distant.

II.

WE must all think aerially now. We stand at the dawn of a great world-wide, smoothly-working system of airways. And the coming of this air age dissipates, once and for all, the idea that any nation, no matter how powerful, can preserve an attitude of isolation towards its neighbours. Nothing will serve us but the broadest conception of what world-flying really means.

A profound influence on our notions of long-distance travel is exercised already by the power of the 100-miles-an-hour "air express" to fly directly from point to point without any deviations or slackenings of speed. Now, in fact, that we have flying routes figuring in our travel guides, we must learn, when we are in a hurry, to say not "How many miles is it?" but "In how many hours can I get there by air?"

The standard in world-wide travel is no longer the mileage that exists between two points far distant from each other, but the actual time it takes to travel that distance. Here one can best illustrate one's point by some definite examples. Take, for instance, the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. Columbus, in his historic voyage in the sailing ship *Santa Maria*, took 41 days for the passage in 1492. The first steamship to cross without sails, the *Sirius*, made the voyage in 17 days in 1838. Coming to as recent a year as 1909, we find that the ocean greyhound *Mauretania* steamed from Queenstown to New York in 4 days 10 hours 41 minutes. Then last June, inaugurating the new era, came the non-stop aeroplane flight from St. John's, Newfoundland, to County Galway, Ireland, an Atlantic passage which occupied just three minutes under sixteen hours!

Picture to yourself what this means when applied to human activities. It confers upon us a new power. Aerial transport, as Lord Cowdray has said, will have the effect of lengthening our lives, because it will enable us to do more in a given time than we have been able to do before. Journeys of weeks can be reduced to days, and those of days to hours. We shall, thanks to the "air express," spend week-ends in cities hundreds of miles distant just as readily as we do now in Brighton. We shall fly to the Riviera from Saturday to Monday; and the summer holiday-maker, widening immensely his field of travel, will be able to spend his few weeks, if he so chooses, down among those romantic islands of the South Pacific.

It is our task now, therefore, to girdle the globe by air.

On the famous Civil Aerial Transport Committee, to which the present writer had the honour of acting as technical secretary, and more recently in connection with Lord Weir's committee on air routes, and the three days' "air Parliament" at the Guildhall, London, the consideration of this great question was carried far enough for discussion to be replaced by action. The trunk airways must now be organised link by link on a definite and uniform plan. We have pilots and aircraft, but what we lack are aerial ports and that land organisation without which long-distance flying can never be made reliable. The time is

ripe—in fact, overdue—for a practical international system of airway establishment and maintenance, and for a standardisation of all ground equipment.

III.

WORLD-FLYING, with routes stretching everywhere, is not the colossal task some people might think. What is being done every day now between London and Paris can be extended section by section, with aircraft flying in relays, until passengers, mails, or goods can be transported anywhere throughout the world.

Many years ago in America they sent urgent letters for thousands of miles by pony post. A rider used to start off at the beginning of the journey, and gallop a stage of 10 miles. His letter-bag was then transferred to another rider, who galloped a second stage of 10 miles, and so on. It is on this principle that long-distance airways will be organised, only in their case each section will represent a distance usually of several hundred miles. Different types of aircraft will also be employed, according to the nature of the route. On land sections we shall employ ordinary aeroplanes. For short sea passages, or for coastal or inter-island flying, we shall have seaplanes or big flying boats, and for long trans-ocean journeys there will be the large rigid-type airship.

The creation and equipment of a main trunk "airway" is a very much less costly operation than the establishment of a

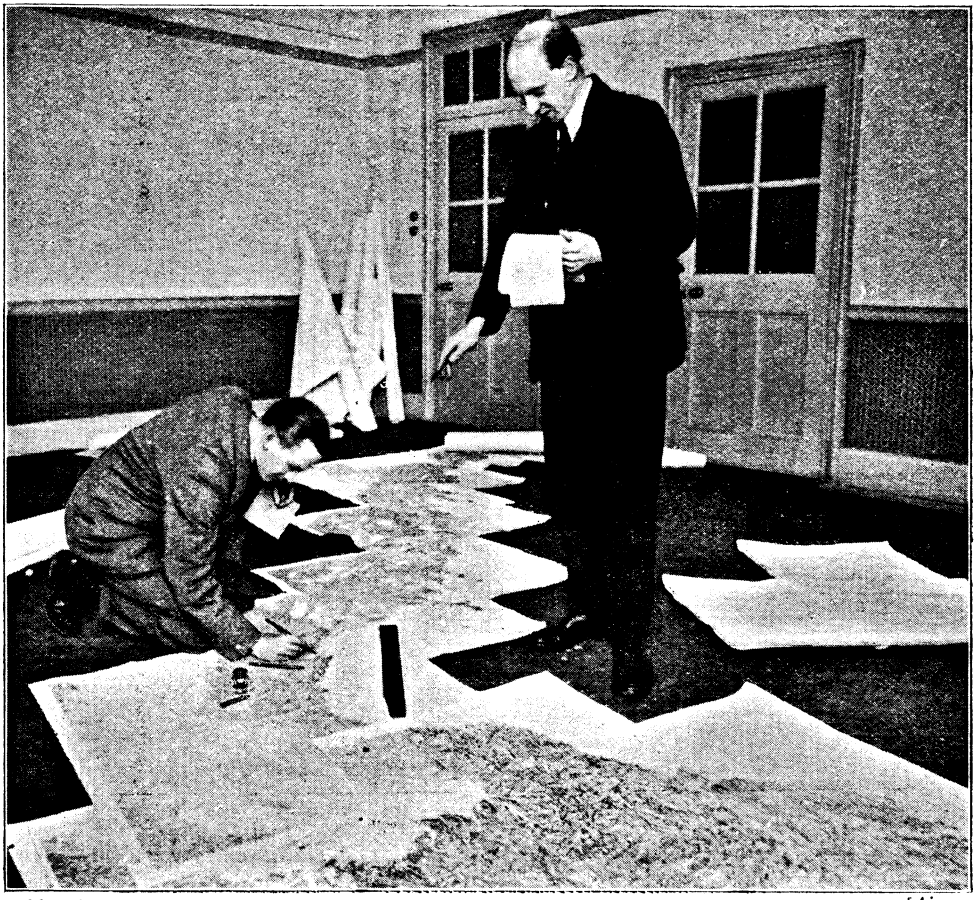


Photo by] [*Airco.*

SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED MILES AIR MAP.

Members of the map section of Aircraft Transport and Travel are here seen preparing a map, 150 feet in length, which shows every detail of the 7,500 miles air route right through from London to Cape Town. When finished such maps take the form of long, narrow strips, mounted on rollers in a special case, which is fixed in front of the pilot's seat. By turning a handle the airman shifts the map so that he has always before his eye the section of country over which he is passing.

railway. We have an interesting illustration in the recent work of our Air Ministry in "blazing the trail" for the important air route from Cairo to Cape Town. The task was difficult. More than once alighting points had literally to be hacked out of virgin forest; but aerodromes, with a store of petrol at each, have now been provided at intervals of about 300 miles along the 5,000-miles route, and a certain number of emergency alighting points have also been cleared. The cost of this valuable pioneer work was, it is understood, about £50,000. It is not claimed, of course, in this particular case, that anything more has been done than to sketch out a route—to provide the nucleus for a regular commercial "airway." At certain times of the year, with the route as it is, its use would be prevented by the inundation of some of the aerodromes. These will have to be concreted or drained in some way, and it will also be necessary, if a full commercial use is to be made of the route, to illuminate it for regular night flying. But the experience gained already on this first historical Cairo-Cape "airway" is proving highly instructive.

Another most interesting project, already well advanced, is the South American "airway" between Pernambuco and Buenos Ayres. This will cover a total distance of 2,600 miles, and will be divided into eleven stages. At first flying will take place only by daylight, and at three points, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Porte Alegre, comfortable sleeping quarters will be provided. Even with day flying only, the airway travellers will save six clear days as compared with the journey by mail boat; and when night-flying equipment is provided, it will be possible to traverse this 2,600-miles airway in about 39 hours. The cost for an air-mail express letter from end to end should not, it is thought, be more than about three shillings.

A clear idea of the speed of aerial transport, when long distances are covered in relays, is provided by the tentative time schedule for the main trunk airway, 4,200 miles in length, by which it is proposed that London should be connected with Pernambuco, the terminal point of the South American system just described. The first stage, on leaving London, will be to Paris, and

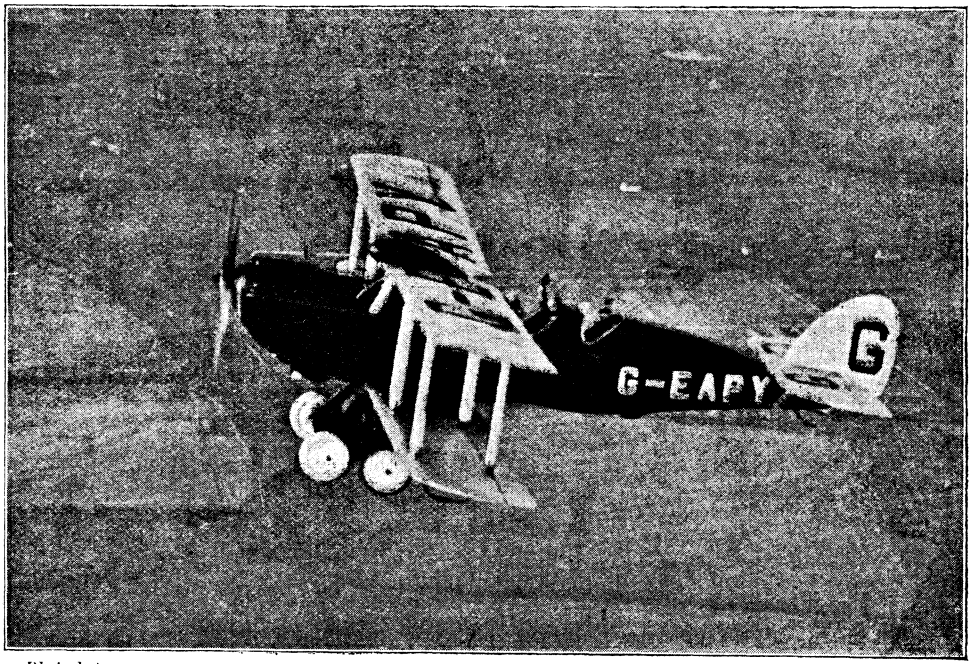
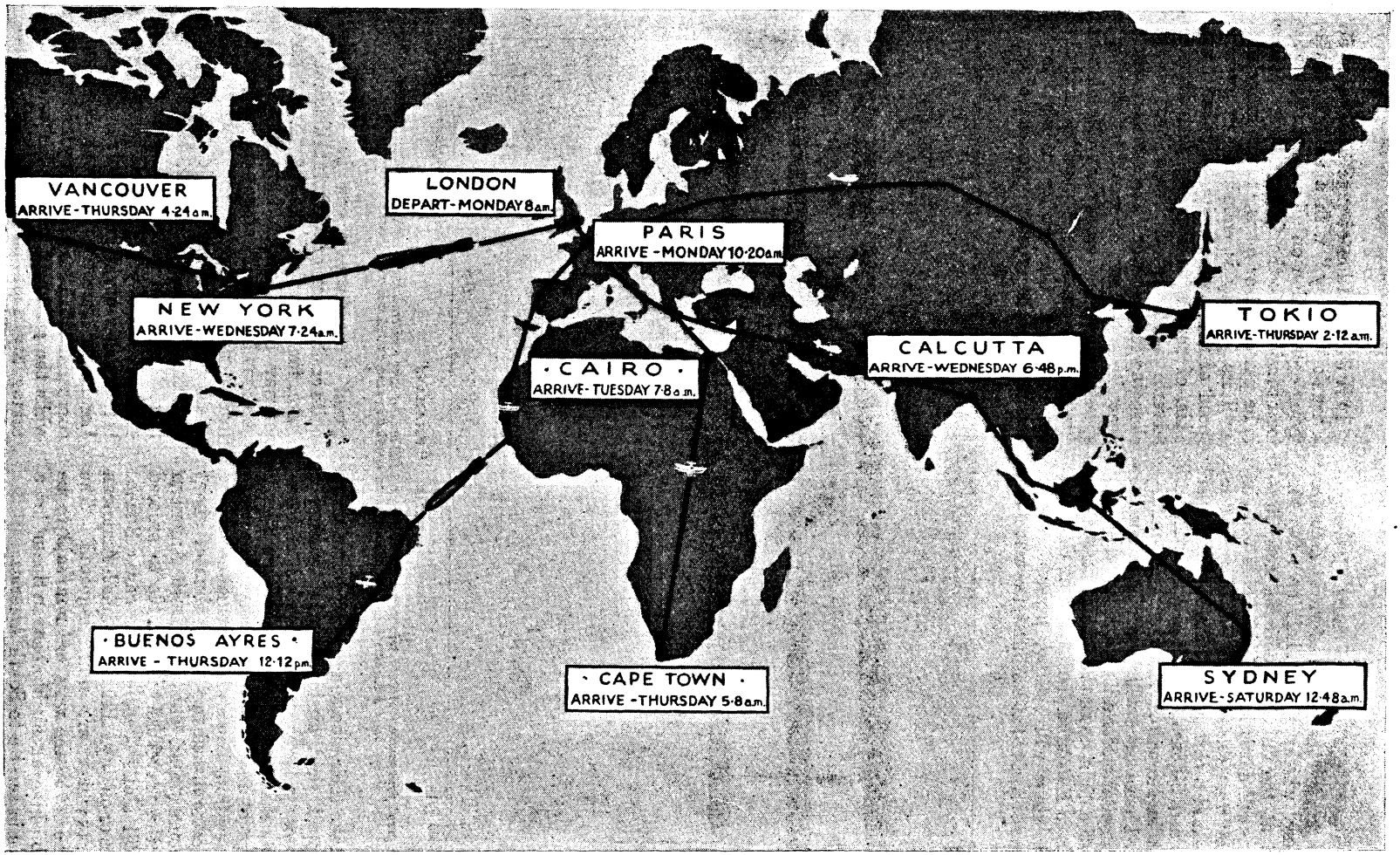


Photo by] [*Airco.*

THE AERIAL "LORRY."

Large consignments of urgent goods are now transported by air between London and the Continent at a rate of 1s. a lb. The big machine seen in flight above is of a type which, driven by one engine developing between 450 horse-power and 500 horse-power, can be adapted to carry as much as two and a half tons of cargo for several hundred miles without alighting. By next spring we may have a 4-ton "air lorry."



THE DISTANCE-DEVOURING AIRWAY. BY GEOFFREY WATSON.

The map above illustrates world travel by air maintained at 100 miles an hour night and day by relays of aeroplanes, seaplanes, and large rigid airships. Voyagers are assumed to leave London, for various parts of the world, at 8 a.m. on Monday morning, and the map shows the scheduled time of arrival at cities as far distant as Vancouver, Buenos Ayres, Sydney, and Tokio.

will be accomplished in 2¼ hours. Through passengers will then be transferred to another machine, which, with a halt *en route* for petrol at the Cazau aerodrome, near Bordeaux, will effect in about 7 hours the air journey from Paris to Madrid. Here, after a halt and a change of craft, voyagers will reach in a 5-hours' flight the air-station at Rabat in Morocco. Then, entering multi-engined aeroplanes which will have special accommodation for a long journey, they will make the flight down the African coast from Rabat to Bathurst, the capital of Gambia.

This stage will occupy, perhaps, 13 or 14 hours. Arrived at Bathurst, the travellers will take their places in a large, luxuriously-equipped rigid airship, which, making a trans-ocean flight through the belt of equatorial calms, will reach Pernambuco after a voyage of about 18 or 20 hours. The whole journey from London to Pernambuco should be accomplished in a flying time of about 48 hours; and, once on South American soil, the travellers will be able to proceed at will along the airway towards Buenos Ayres or on any other of the South American routes which are now projected. The Germans, by the way, are now said to be establishing an airship base in Spain for a Zeppelin service to South America.

It is the ambition of experts so to equip a trunk "airway" with a uniform night-flying organisation on all sections that any load consigned to the air, no matter whether it be passengers or mails, is kept in motion, until its journey is ended, at an average speed of not less than 100 miles an hour. This, of course, taking into consideration adverse winds and the time occupied in changing from one craft to another, would necessitate the use of machines attaining speeds appreciably more than 100 miles an hour. Such craft are obtainable. And the extraordinary time-saving which would accrue from the regular operation of such aerial "speedways" can be represented quite easily by one or two actual illustrations. Take, for example, Cairo. A normal earth journey from London may be estimated at about 4 days. By airway it could be done in 23 hours 8 minutes. Then, going farther afield, take Calcutta. By ordinary transport this journey lasts, say, 16 days. By airway it could be accomplished in 58 hours 48 minutes. By high-speed airway, also, the traveller could get right through from London to Vancouver in about 68 hours, as compared with 10 or 11 days by land and sea; while the journey from London to Sydney, taking, say, about 30 days by earth transit,

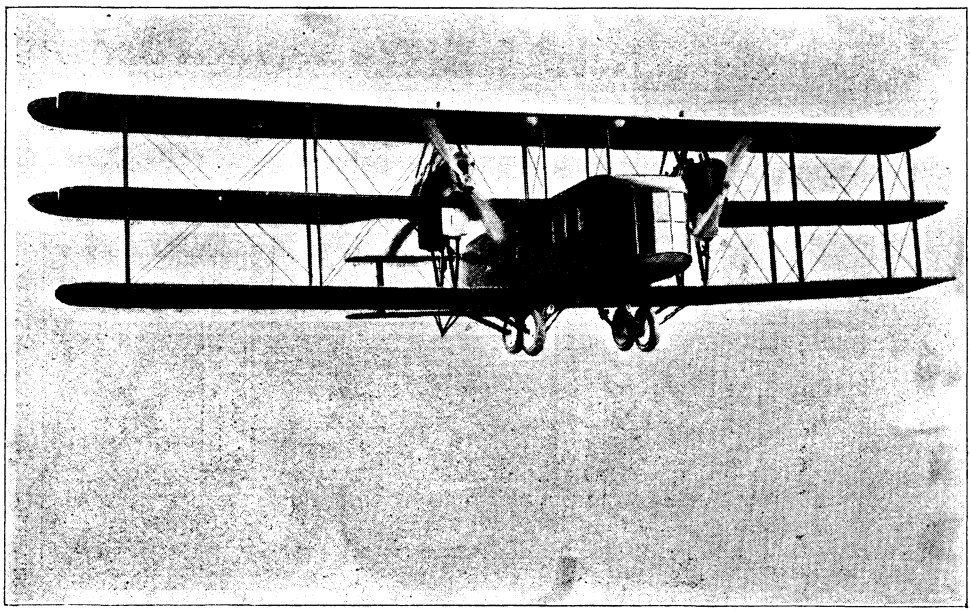


Photo by] [*Bristol Aeroplane Company.*

A FLYING "PULLMAN."

The great four-engined Bristol triplane, which develops 1,640 horse-power and transports sixteen air travellers in a big Pullman saloon at a maximum speed as great as 134 miles an hour.

could be accomplished by air in 112 hours 48 minutes. Such examples, which could be multiplied did space permit, show what we may expect from aircraft flying at speed.

IV.

Of all commercial flying machines, perhaps the most interesting is the large trans-ocean airship of the type mentioned as making the flight from Bathurst to Pernambuco. Huge as some of the airships seemed which were in use at the end of the War, such craft will be dwarfed completely by the vast Atlantic-type commercial craft now being designed, and which will in some cases be five times bigger than even the largest airship in existence to-day.

When, only a short time ago, the President of the Zeppelin Company went to New York to discuss with prominent financiers there the institution of a regular airship service between European cities and New York—now promised definitely for early in 1921—he described the Zeppelin Company's plans for an air leviathan which would carry as many as 500 passengers. There is, in fact, when it comes to transporting large loads at high speeds, everything in favour of these very big airships. The larger they are, up to a point, and the more passengers they carry, the lower it will be possible for companies which run them to fix the trans-Atlantic fares. With a 4,000,000 cubic feet ship, it has been reckoned that the single air fare between New York and London would have to be about £100. With a 10,000,000 cubic feet vessel it is reckoned the fare might be reduced to a little less than £100; and with a giant as large as 20,000,000 cubic feet, carrying hundreds of passengers, and making the London-New York passage in about 48 hours, it is believed that the fare need not be more than about £60.

An outstanding feature of long-distance airship travel will be its comfort. It should, in fact, when a journey is made in one of the beautiful craft now in design, be the smoothest and most delightful way of all in which to travel. These trans-Atlantic "air-liners" will have cabins, dining-rooms, and upper-deck lounges on a scale of comfort to satisfy the most fastidious and experienced of travellers; while in one or two of them there will be beautifully-furnished, self-contained suites, forward on top of the airship, which it is expected that millionaires will reserve at some very fancy prices.

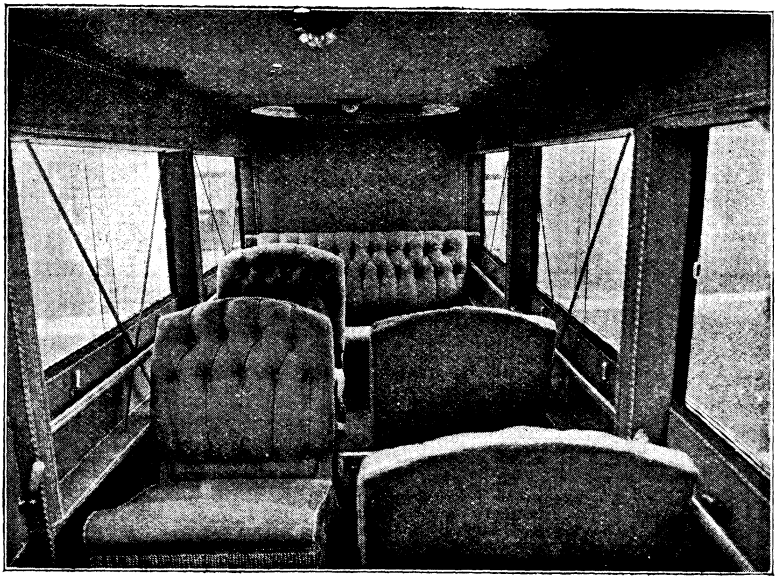


Photo by] [*Airco.*

COMFORT ON THE AIRWAY.

The passenger saloon, with its luxuriously-padded seats and wide side-windows, of the new type of London-Paris "air express," which flies so fast that it often does the journey between the capitals in two hours or a few minutes over. A sound-deadening partition, between engine and saloon, renders conversation easy even at the highest speeds.

American business men, taught, so to say, from their cradles that every minute saved is a minute gained, should be keen and regular patrons of a trans-ocean air service. Their quickness to grasp the commercial value of air transport is shown by the fact that during the first twelve months of the aeroplane service between New York and Washington more than 7,000,000 letters were air-borne between the two cities. By an important and recently-opened extension of the American air-mail system, New York is now connected with distant San Francisco, and ultimately, when night as

well as day flying is possible on this route, letters will get through by air in 32 hours as contrasted with about 4 days by the fastest land transport.

V.

BOUND up inseparably with the question of the world's airways is the problem of understanding, and making practical use of, the winds which blow thousands of feet above the earth. If an airman, when on a long flight, can so manœuvre his craft that it enters an area of wind blowing strongly in the direction he wants to go, then miles an hour may be added to the speed of his flight, and his journey finished far sooner than would otherwise be the case—a most important advantage, naturally, when purely commercial flying is considered.

It becomes imperative, therefore, that we should know more than we do at present about the movements of the upper atmosphere. The aerial trade winds must now be charted on a comprehensive scale. The commercial future of airships depends in a large measure upon such an accurate knowledge of upper wind currents as will permit these craft, by flying at some prescribed altitude, to increase appreciably their rate of travel, and thus overcome to some extent the disadvantage of their comparatively slow speed.

A distinguished technician, M. Rateau, has told the French Academy that when it is possible to adapt commercial aircraft, with their engines and screws, to the diminished air density of high altitudes, it may be feasible to fly, as a matter of routine, at heights as great as 20,000 feet, and to obtain regular speeds of nearly 300 miles an hour!

Aerial soundings may be taken at great altitudes by various methods. One way of securing data is to send up kites with self-recording instruments. By another method, now employed systematically, small hydrogen balloons are sent up carrying instruments which, when the balloon reaches earth again, tell the height that has been attained and the strength of the winds blowing at various altitudes.

The aim of such tests, made frequently at very great heights, is to throw light on the movements and velocities of vast gales of wind which blow in these upper regions, and will be used eventually by air pilots on trans-ocean flights in the same way that captains of sailing ships take advantage of the trade winds at sea-level.

Balloon soundings yield already some very striking data. In one specific instance, not long ago, it was shown by the recording instruments that at a height of 26,000 feet the wind had been blowing at the super-hurricane strength of nearly 200 miles an hour. It is, incidentally, fortunate for us earth folk that these huge winds blow only at heights vastly above our heads. Ground-level hurricanes, even those which are destructive, do not attain often a speed of more than about 100 miles an hour; so one can imagine the devastation which would lie in the trail of a wind-storm moving at nearly twice this pace.

A way which now presents itself for amplifying air soundings by kite or balloon is for an aeroplane pilot to ascend as high as he can and make personal observations. Tests in this manner have already been carried out, and further experimental work is now promised in Europe and also in America. Some immensely high flights are, in fact, now being planned, while it should be noted, parenthetically, that such data as have been gained already from aeroplane observation confirm generally the existence of aerial trade winds attaining velocities far greater than those recorded in the lower air. In America one expert, while on a scientific observation flight, has ascended already to a height of slightly more than six miles!

Naturally, at such abnormal heights, it is necessary for the airman to inhale oxygen, and the suggestion has now been made, and will probably be acted upon, that instead of breathing the oxygen in through a mask—as adopted hitherto in sporting height records—the wind-charting pilot should be totally enclosed in a suitable chamber or cabin, to which oxygen could be fed by some system under his control. This would leave him freer to make his records and observations.

Many theories have been brought forward as to the wind-trends high above oceans, and one which is exceptionally important, and which it is hoped to prove or disprove before long, is that at an altitude of about 50,000 feet, or approximately 10 miles above the surface of the earth, there are vast trans-Atlantic winds moving at speeds as great as 250 or 300 miles an hour.

Assuming that aerial trade winds do blow at altitudes so far uncharted, and that they can be taken regular advantage of, we shall in the future have "air liners" sweeping up till they are lost sight of among the

clouds—soaring up and up into the region of great favouring winds which will bear them at huge speeds for thousands of miles, the occupants of their saloons being supplied automatically, without their being conscious of it, or suffering any inconvenience, with oxygen to compensate for the rarity of the air at the vast heights at which they are flying.

If the navigator of a trans-Atlantic aircraft with a speed of 100 miles an hour finds he is able so to manœuvre his machine that it is borne forward in one of these mighty currents of upper air, this may mean that passengers from New York to London will, when in haste, be able to make the journey in not more than about ten hours!

Such a prospect is amazing—incalculable almost in its influence on human life. There are those, perhaps, who would declare it impossible; but I, for one, shall not.

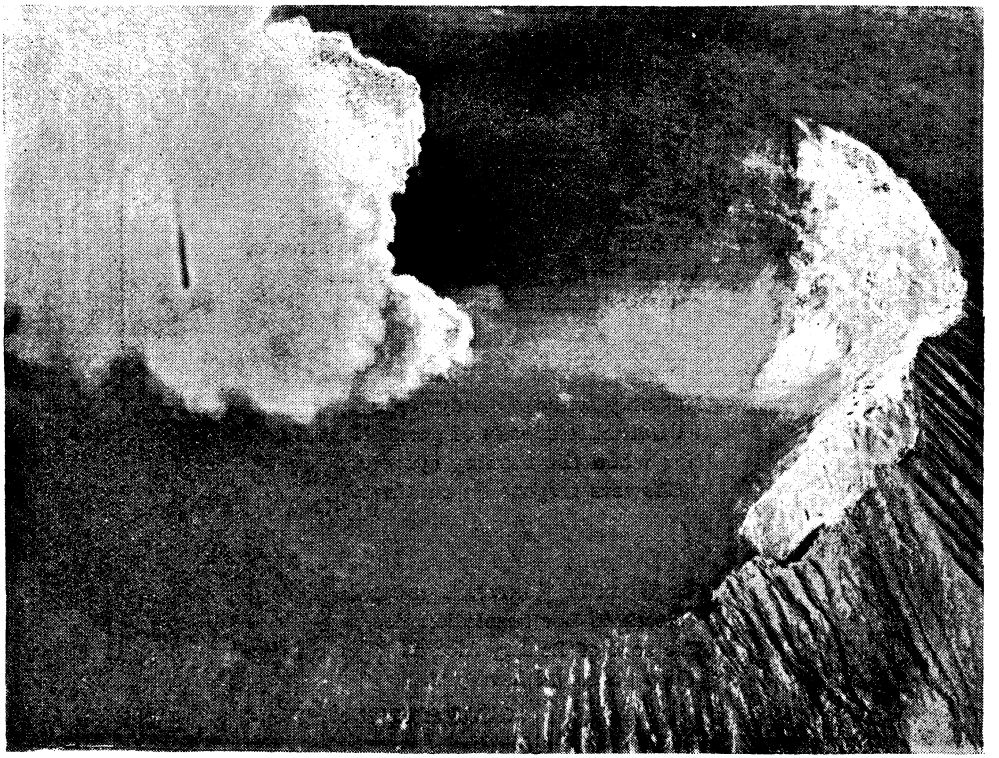


Photo supplied by] [*Central News.*

THE CRATER OF VESUVIUS PHOTOGRAPHED FROM AN AEROPLANE.

A MEMORY.

AS one who steps inside a darkened room
And, by the fragrance, knows
That somewhere in the shadowy depths beyond
There lies a withered rose,

So I, within my room of memories,
Shall enter, knowing this
That, flower-like, through the gloom will come to me
Your last remembered kiss.

LORNA KEELING COLLARD.

A SONG OF WINTER

NOT only when each changing hue
Of field and forest tells of Spring,
And island clouds are bathed in blue,
Is Beauty blossoming.

Not only when the leaf-spears shake
From the cleft willows to the stream,
While listless, ruddy cattle slake
Their thirst, as in a dream;

Not only when a sandy floor
Of stubble speaks of garner'd grain,
Nor when the flaming sycamore
Showers largess on the lane.

For when in Winter, feigning death,
Earth in her desolation lies,
The soul of Beauty blooms beneath
The petals of her eyes.

GEOFFREY F. FYSON.

MRS. VANE CLEARS UP

By B. A. CLARKE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

TO the Vanes experiences even more appalling than their mother's clearings-up were the resultant clearings-down. Clearing-up, or the removal of *débris* from basement breakfast-room to a floor above, was progress, and pointed to its ultimate arrival at the attics, where, perhaps, it would become invisible, whereas clearing-down was an admission that litter was as visible there as elsewhere, and even more obstructive, and a return to conditions that the tribal council had condemned.

The Vanes were an undivided grown-up family, occupying an inconceivably tall and narrow house in West Lawton, and reproducing many institutions of the Aryans before they had reached the conception of personal property. A Vane, for example, had no absolute right to the clothes he bought, but merely the usufruct. When his tenancy of a suit terminated, it lapsed to Mrs. Vane, as representing the tribe—obviously a survival of the village Mark. Mrs. Vane would examine it through her steel-rimmed spectacles, and having pronounced it good and admirably adapted for "rough business wear" (the phrase is hers) by some younger member, would pin to it a half sheet of notepaper whereon was written the name of the lucky but unenvied successor to it. A few evenings later he would find the suit, still wet from the sponging, laid out temptingly upon his bed. Unless he rejected it at sight (an unusual course, because almost any second-hand suit can look presentable until it has been worn once or twice), he would wear it for a week with growing rage, and then dump it on one of the piles of clothing that, like pillars, broke the wall line of their underground breakfast-room. There it would remain until Mrs. Vane reshuffled the cards and allotted it to someone else

Oh, those piles of suits! No one could remember when the breakfast-room had been free from them. At supper, when the Vanes became, not only gregarious, but also ruminating, they were conscious of this untidiness, which they now saw through the eyes of possible visitors. At a knock at the front door the family became a Madame Tussaud tableau. Forks and spoons on their way from plate to mouth stayed arrested in mid-air until the little general—as alarmed as themselves—returned to report. If it was a visitor who could not be sent away unfed, the twins were rushed up to the cold little drawing-room into which he had been ushered, to distract him with a loud pianoforte duet, under cover of which the other members of the tribe, in stockinged feet, transferred tablecloth, plates and dishes to the quite creditable dining-room. With long practice they had become incredibly swift and skilful at this. Before the twins reached the final crashing chords of the Anvil Chorus from "Il Trovatore," the others were seated in dignity at the dining-room table, *and with their boots on.*

"Of course you have had supper?" one of the twins would say, while the piano was still trembling from the recent allied assault upon it. "No? Oh, you poor thing! You must come into the dining-room at once."

Mrs. Vane would receive him graciously in that queenly but jovial manner of hers, and say without blinking—

"It is the rule of the house not to 'fuss' our visitors. We expect them to take us just as we are."

"Suppose he had, whatever would he have thought of us?" was the speculation in many minds. All felt they had had a narrow escape, although it is not easy to see how a visitor could invade their subterranean fastness uninvited, or find it without a guide.

Sometimes an experience like this would start a movement for reform. When the street door closed upon the departing guest, a tribal council would be called, and this would present an ultimatum.

"Mother, you *must* clear the breakfast-room of these awful suits."

"My dears, to-morrow as ever is"—this with her rollicking laugh—"I will have a clear-up."

And she would, too; no one ever questioned Mrs. Vane's energy.

You never saw a room so spick and span as the breakfast-room the next time they sat down to supper. Why was it no visitor ever came during these bright intervals? The first discordant note would be struck when Bertha went up to her bedroom, the first-floor back.

"Mother! Mother! Why have you dumped all the old suits into my room? I can't get into bed."

It wasn't so bad as that, but it was pretty bad.

Mrs. Vane would explain that this arrangement was merely temporary. A week or so later Bertha would effect a clear-up on her own account, and bundle out the whole lot on to the landing. After being on view a day or two in the first-floor front, Mrs. Vane's own bedroom, the second-floor front, where slept Andrew and Tom, would house the sartorial museum for perhaps three weeks, while the brothers were deciding whose business it was to expel it. Usually the clothes were about six weeks in transit from basement to attic. It came as a disappointment to everyone to discover that here there was even less spare space than downstairs. In the box-room slept the little general (a large woman could not possibly have been squeezed in), and the attic where the twins slept was full to the door. So, merely as a temporary expedient, the suits were left on the attic landing.

Just as the general and the twins had developed a sixth sense for mountaineering in the dark, these Cheviot hills would disappear. The hateful and hopeless clearing-down had begun, which would end with the old suits back against the breakfast-room walls, and the reappearance upon the piano of the music of the Anvil Chorus from "Il Trovatore."

At last the folk-moot reached a decision which was not communicated to the chief—that advantage should be taken of her first absence from home to have a clear-out of old garments. Not a clear-up, mark you!

The opportunity came three months later.

"Of course," said Bertha, in her gentle drawl, "the suits must not be sold. Poor mother has seen in them such amazing possibilities that she would never forgive our parting with them for a mere song. And she denounces mission jumble sales."

"I think," said Fred, "Mater would condone the alienation of what she regards as valuable family property if it helped to keep some well-born but necessitous men from losing caste. We must look around for such cases."

They did, but with no success. Decayed aristocrats whose relaxing hold on their high rank could be strengthened by shiny reefers with enlarged buttonholes, slopped waistcoats, and ankle-fringed trousers, eluded them. They had to be content with a find of Tom's—the office-boy of the Mincing Lane produce firm for whom he acted as market clerk. Young Todd had mentioned an uncle by marriage in Western Canada, a Mr. Hobbleditch, who had lost three successive wheat harvests by hail. He had not asked for aid, but it was not difficult to persuade the boy that a gift of suits would be welcome in Canada, where clothes are particularly dear and peculiarly indispensable. The Hobbleditches were not quite the social class the Vanes had had in view, but if they spoke of the boy to their mother as Tom's colleague, it might pass.

So Master Todd was invited to tea. Deferential to Tom during their journey down from Town, he became abject at sight of the twins. Of Bertha he was less frightened. They fed him to repletion, and then began the task of the evening.

The uncle being described as "just the very spit of Mr. Tom," the first gift was four of Tom's old suits, one for each season.

"Thank you—oh, thank you so much! Oh, yes, indeed, I am sure they must be!" The last remark was in reply to Bertha, who was pointing out how much better the suits were than they looked.

"Here is a nice medium-weight Cheviot," said Fred briskly, "the very thing for between-season weather that is too hot for a winter suit, you know, and too uncertain for a summer."

And before the office-boy could phrase his delight, it was in the passage with the other four. They didn't want him kept in mind of all they were giving him.

"As your uncle may not favour Cheviots,"

said Tom—" some men won't wear them—he had better have this West of England."

" And this Angora," said Beryl.

" This Cashmere ! " cried Molly.

" You can't omit this Persian," drawled Bertha; "it is the pride of our collection."

In a sense it was, having been discarded long before its time because of the alleged resemblance of its very striking pattern to a carpet of the Caliphs, which, of course, had suggested the name the family had given it.

Long before Master Todd had achieved adequate expression of his gratitude, the West of England, the Cashmere, the Angora, and the Persian suits had joined the medium-weight Cheviot in the passage.

Bertha now withdrew from the crowd to write upon half-sheets of notepaper—which had been torn from letters of correspondents more prodigal of stationery than news—the purpose of each gift. Partly this was in case Todd, when he reached home, might not see any Canadian future for it, but there was in it also a touch of filial piety. How many score of labels, similarly optimistic and resourceful, had her mother, at one time or another, attached to these garments !

Fred, knowing exactly what was troubling his eldest sister, pressed her arm sympathetically.

" It had to be, Bertha. Sooner or later, if we had not taken this step, mother would have been forced to do something of the same kind herself."

" I am glad she has been spared that."

" What is Bertha sniffing about ? " said Molly. " Why doesn't she come over here and fix up something for our visitor's cousin ? "

The office-boy described the Canadian cousin as a growing lad. The possibilities of growth from childhood until the lad attained the height of six feet two were anticipated, and still there remained cloth pillars against the breakfast-room wall. Master Todd now was not allowed even a peep into the passage.

Then Beryl made a helpful suggestion. " Your uncle may not be Tom's height, but a size shorter or taller. We had better provide against both possibilities."

They did this so generously as to move the lad to tears.

" I can't possibly carry them home," he sobbed ; " they would fill a cart, and I've lost the last 'bus. I've a great mind to chuck the whole thing. My uncle never asked for anythink. I don't have to obey Mr. Tom except at the office."

His benefactors were in despair. And then there came from the street a refrain sung with the hopeless misery and thickness of utterance of partial intoxication—

> " In the gloaming, oh, my darling,
> Think not bitterly of me ! "

The voice lingered lovingly on the word " bitter."

" It must be that rascal Joe Slater," said Andrew, " the outside porter mother periodically reforms. The only lasting result of her efforts is that Joe always hides his handcart in the lane between the Jacksons' and the Wrights' back gardens when he is going into ' The Cricketer's Arms,' for fear mother should see how he has lapsed."

" I saw him do that to-night," said John, the baby of the family, a loose-limbed giant of nineteen, " and I wondered that he didn't know mother was out of town. It is Joe, all right," he continued, peeping through the blinds, " and, by Jove, he is going home without his handcart ! "

The Vanes looked at one another. Without a word being said, they arranged a crime. Temporarily they would appropriate Joe's handcart.

Andrew brought it to the area steps. The Vane men frenziedly loaded the cart, while the girls fussed over young Todd to prevent his noticing that, not only was the passage being cleared of cloth clothes, but also the breakfast-room. And then the four men, with hands on the cart, accompanied the boy to the top of the hill, pointing out to him how light his load really was.

" Good-bye, Todd," said Tom. " No, don't thank us ; we are only too glad to do this for you. To-morrow I'll send Joe over to your place for his cart. Of course I will pay him. Be good." And they fairly ran away, for fear that even then their victim would rebel. Indeed, he contemplated doing so, but, finding that the cart pushed quite easily, took a more cheerful view of his burden, this pile so huge to the eye, so surprisingly light to wheel, that his heart became light in sympathy, and also his heels, which of themselves had broken into a coltish gallop. And then he realised that he was being run away with. The gradient was increasing rapidly, and soon he was at the top of his speed. He noticed now that a short distance ahead the road bent so abruptly that its further course was hidden. He hoped that there the slope ended. He could keep up so far. But the

hoped-for haven revealed a precipice. Actually it was the steepest incline in Greater London, and a mile long. With a scream of terror, the boy let go, and, stupefied at the possibilities of his act, saw the cart disappear into the darkness. And then he ran, taking any turning that presented itself.

Meanwhile Mr. Slater was returning in a serpentine line to retrieve his property. Arrived at the foot of the great hill, its ascent appeared almost as terrific as the descent had to the overwrought nerves of young Todd.

"Oh, lor," he hiccoughed, "and I must climb that! I wish they'd build carts to come to call like dogs. That's a good 'un, that is. I'll try it."

In tipsy hilarity he began to whistle and shout—

"Good old cart! Good old boy! Did they forget him? Come along, then, lad! Come along, then!"

And it came. The full moon, breaking through the clouds, revealed the faithful cart two-thirds down the hill, bounding joyously towards him. A policeman rushed out into the road to stop it, but lost his nerve and fled. The cart swerved towards him.

"Seize him, boy! Seize him! Pull him down!" shrieked the delighted Slater.

As if in obedience to these calls, the cart caught the constable, knocked him down, jumped on him, and, glancing off a lamp-post, continued its course.

"Good cart! Good old boy! Come along, then!" shrieked its owner, slapping his knee.

A heavy hand descended upon his shoulder—the hand of P.C. Campbell returning from his beat.

"So that is your game, is it, setting your handcart at the police? You come with me."



"'Good cart! Good old boy! Come along, then!' shrieked its owner, slapping his knee."



"The cart caught the constable, knocked him down, jumped on him, and, glancing off a lamp-post, continued its course."

Vigorously resisting, Joe was being forced up the six steps that led to the police station, when a crash behind them compelled a truce. Both men screamed. The cart had struck the asphalt island built for the safety of 'bus takers, and now, on its right wheel only, was rushing at them. It climbed the kerb, achieved the six steps, and collapsed in the vestibule, half burying its master and the constable in coats, waistcoats, and trousers.

"What is the charge, Campbell?" asked Sergeant Ball, dipping his pen in the ink.

"Two charges, sir—letting a handcart run loose down Lawton Hill, to the danger of His Majesty's subjects, and inciting it to attack a policeman, Z 26, who had attempted to arrest it."

"Say that again."

Campbell did so.

"And the cart obeyed him, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir—coursed Z 26 like a hare, the prisoner all the while laughing and encouraging it."

"I was calling of it orf!" cried Joe indignantly.

"I don't accept a word of your statement, Campbell; it outrages my common-sense."

"'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio!'"

His superior officer bristled.

"My name is Horace. And who gave you leave to address me by my Christian name?"

"You cannot refuse, sir, to take an officer's evidence."

"Yes, I can when it ignores the necessary relations of cause and effect and contradicts the unalterable laws of Nature."

"Philosophy knows nothing of such, only of sequences, loosely termed cause and effect, that have, perhaps, hitherto been unvarying. We say that a certain cause necessarily is followed by a certain effect, but the necessity exists only in our own minds. We necessarily expect what we call the order of Nature to continue, but logic cannot justify our confidence."

"There is universal experience against you."

"A gross fault in logic to assert an invariable rule when the subject of discussion is an alleged infraction of it."

"Well, I won't accept testimony to an absurdity, and that's flat. In any case, it is only your word against his. I take it, Joe, you deny this ridiculous charge of setting your handcart at Z 26?"

"Yes, sir. I kept telling it to lie down."

"With due respect to your ruling, sir, it isn't my unsupported word against his. My statement will be endorsed by Z 26, if he is still alive."

"Is there any reason to doubt it?"

"I didn't see him get up after the assault, being occupied in making the arrest. I hope he isn't killed, I am sure."

But at this juncture Z 26 (Police Constable Thomas) appeared to set at rest their well-controlled anxiety about him. His tale was substantially the same as Campbell's.

"Why don't you say," growled the sergeant, "that the handcart bit you? I suppose Campbell would see nothing impossible in that?"

"If Z 26 alleges that he was bitten, it is necessary to consider his evidence. Nothing can be dismissed as *à priori* impossible."

A murmur of applause came from two underlings hidden beneath piles of cloth suits they were bringing in.

"This is what comes of having a Scotchman in my force. This whole station is rotten with metaphysics and mysticism."

"'There are more things——'" began Z 26 sagely, but his chief stopped him.

"My man, if you are going to call me Horatio, you can hand in your baton now. The charge of inciting is dismissed. Now for the other. How fast was the cart going when you caught sight of it?"

"Between twenty-seven and twenty-eight miles an hour, sir."

"Considering the years you have been in the force, Thomas, your estimate is surprisingly vague. I have taken it down twenty-eight; it is a safe rule, where such uncertainty prevails, to accept the highest figure. Twenty-eight miles an hour, you say? Then how could the prisoner have let it run and be at the foot of the hill to meet it? No applause, please! You see, Campbell, what the human mind can achieve, working within its proper limits. Has anyone taken the name on the cart?"

"Yes, sir," said Campbell—"Joe Slater."

"It is his, then! Come, my man, explain how your cart came to be running unattended down West Lawton Hill at midnight."

Slater's statement seemed to intrigue the sergeant. When it came to an end, he sat for a time in deep thought.

"May I go home, sir?" asked the prisoner.

"Yes, yes."

"And take my cart?"

"Oh, yes!"

He seemed impatient to get the fellow away, and jumped up excitedly when the door closed upon him. "Campbell, Thomas, do you know what is behind this? Burglary, and on a prodigious scale. Nothing but the removal of a house's entire contents can explain the purloining of this."

He held up a waistcoat part of a suit that had had a second life in the garden.

"Crime is rarely so ruthless. Miscreants who would grudge their victim this would remove the knocker from his door and the paper from his walls."

"If you suspect Slater of burglary, sir, why did you let him go?"

"Slater? Thomas, how dull you are! Let me reconstruct the crime for you. It is nearing midnight. Before a large house—the extent of this wardrobe indicates a considerable mansion—stand furniture removal vans. The neighbours do not know that the people of the house are out of town, but think they are moving, and are not concerned one way or the other. Everything has been removed from the house and loaded in the vans except these suits, for which there is absolutely no room. The burglars——"

"The burglars, sir?"

"Of course, Thomas. Who else removes suits at midnight in a stolen handcart? The burglars, I say, are driving away, when they see Joe Slater's handcart standing in the lane."

"How, sir? There is a fence."

"The burglars riding on the top of the pantechnicon can see over the fence."

"Of course, sir. Please continue."

"One of their number jumps down, steals the cart, goes back to the mansion, and brings away these suits. On Lawton Hill the cart runs away from him, and he is forced to abandon it. And now let us examine the suits. Well, what do you make out?" he inquired, after they had made a somewhat prolonged scrutiny.

"It looks to me like the loot of an ole clo' shop," said Thomas.

"Against that," said the sergeant, "is the fact that more than half the suits are labelled 'for the use of Mr. Walter K. Hobbleditch.' Give me over the local directory."

But the name was not to be found there.

"He must be quite a prominent man somewhere," said Sergeant Ball. "I doubt if King George himself has so many suits in wear."

"Probably a centenarian's collection of a lifetime," growled Campbell.

"Not at all: these labels reveal the purpose of each suit, and there are no duplicates. On this, for example, is written 'Lounge suit—Angora—suitable for use between seasons.' The next is described thus: 'Heavy serge reefer, to be worn when the thermometer falls below zero.' The last time this happened in England was in the year 1881, and it may not recur for twenty or thirty years, but whenever it comes it will not catch Walter K. Hobbleditch unprepared. Other climatic possibilities equally remote are anticipated. 'Cheviot lounge, extra light, quiet design, for wearing to church when the shade temperature exceeds one hundred.' Not only is Mr. Hobbleditch forearmed against the season's differences, but also against social demands the most diverse. 'Summer suit—Persian—for Bank Holidays or other occasions of an hilarious nature.' Quite at the other extreme is this white waistcoat 'suitable for ceremonial occasions such as the completion of a branch railway or laying the foundation stone of a chapel.' The outfit of the son referred to as a growing lad, while generous in the number of suits, suggests some carelessness as regards size, as if Mr. Hobbleditch bought ready-made suits blindly. No cutter's incompetence will explain such a difference as between this sailor's suit and this Norfolk jacket which would be too large for me. But, on the whole, it is a wonderful collection, and if Mr. Hobbleditch's furniture and household effects are on the same scale as his wardrobe—which we have no reason to doubt—four pantechnicons would barely contain them. So that is what our men must look out for to-night. I shall telephone, of course, to all neighbouring stations, but I hope that to this office may attach the kudos of frustrating one of the most daring and heartless crimes of the century. Instruct our men to stop any processions of pantechnicons, and tell them, Campbell, that there are master-minds at work here, men capable, when accused of being burglars, of saying brazenly that they are not. No, I must take no risks. The night's instructions are that all pantechnicon processions are to be arrested and brought here to me."

Sergeant Ball's hopes were, of course, disappointed; but, being proud of the way he had reconstructed the crime, he gave out the story to the press. The great dailies saw a silly season sensation in it, and such captions as *The West Lawton Mystery: What is Behind It? The Great Burglary Mystery No Nearer Solution. Who is Walter K. Hobbleditch?* and *What Will Scotland Yard Do Now?* became common. Scotland Yard, by the way, was doing all that Scotland Yard does. Men with large boots and yet larger capacity for drink appeared in the local public-houses, and many ticket-of-leave men were rearrested on suspicion.

The conscience-stricken office-boy confessed his crime to Tom Vane the following morning, but fortunately to no one else, and the Vanes, not wishing to incur ridicule and two hundredweight of old clothes, lay low. They felt safe from detection, and it did not disturb them that their mother's sister, literary Aunt Emily, who was spending a fortnight with them, took an extravagant interest in the local mystery, bought every edition of the evening papers that reached their suburb, and achieved fame by writing a letter, which was published in an evening paper, demanding the employment of bloodhounds. With the true solution staring her in the face, she could not see it, and denounced Scotland Yard for not opening a lock to which she alone could have found the key. For she had noticed the disappearance of the piles of old suits.

"And you have actually found a use for them all, Bertha, without selling them or sending them to mission jumble sales! I call it simply wonderful. And your brothers have always looked quite presentable. It must have saved the family a fortune, with cloth clothes at their present price."

Aunt Emily's misconception that all the suits had been worn again by her nephews arising from her own rash assumption, Bertha did not feel obliged to remove it. It would have been well for them all if she had.

There not being one unoccupied cubic inch of bedroom space at "Malvern," Aunt Emily's visit ended perforce the day before Mrs. Vane's return. Aunt Emily sent her trunk across London by Carter Paterson to a sister-in-law with whom she was to spend a week, and herself made the journey by three omnibuses, the first taking her only as far as the bottom of West Lawton Hill. Missing a connection, she had a wait of twenty-five minutes. Her idle gaze was attracted by a board in front of the police station.

"You are advertising for sale the cloth suits we have been reading about in connection with the West Lawton burglary?"

"Yes, mum."

"May I speak to the officer in charge?"

"Sergeant Ball—certainly, mum. You will find him very pleasant to deal with, so long as you don't call him Horatio."

Aunt Emily and the chief hit it off admirably. Each was delighted with the terms of their bargain.

"I wish to send these as a present. May I write a letter here?"

"Certainly, my dear madam. Shall I telephone for an outside porter? We know that Joe Slater's handcart will take your purchase."

"My dear nephews," wrote their aunt, "nothing has so surprised and pleased me as your having been able to assimilate the immense collection you had of old suits. And your old auntie, who prides herself on her sharp eyes, and who has seen most of you at fairly short intervals, never once suspected that you had all taken to your brothers' cast-off garments. It more than justifies your dear mother's faith in the restorative power of the sponge. An opportunity has arisen of buying at a *ridiculously* low figure a collection in many respects similar. Please accept it as a parting present from

Your loving

AUNTIE."

When Joe Slater reached "Malvern," the servant, a new arrival, ignorant of the family history, was the only person in the house.

"Gracious!" she cried. "Am I expected to carry in all those?"

"Don't you worry, my dear," said the susceptible Joe (the new general was more than passably well-favoured), "I'll do all the carrying, if you will stand by my cart and see that it does not get up to any of its tricks."

"What tricks could it get up to alone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared. "That is a good one, that is. You won't beat that in a hurry. What tricks couldn't it get up to, is the question. You sly old devil, you!" he continued, slapping his cart on the back.

The maid remained beside the vehicle because the street was more cheerful than her basement.

"Keep away from its pole, my good girl!" cried Joe anxiously. "Where shall I pile the suits for you—in the passage?"

"Heavens, no! I could never get to the store cupboard. Stand them round the walls of the breakfast-room."

So the tribe supped that night amid the old familiar hateful surroundings. Visitor-fear gripped them. When a knock came at the front door, Bertha, in a strained voice, asked the twins if the Anvil Chorus was accessible.

"It is on the piano," replied Beryl. "I looked it out when Fred showed me auntie's letter."

But it was only the postman with a letter from their mother to Bertha, announcing that she would be home early on the morrow. There was a postscript.

"Tell the dear boys I am feeling tremendously fit, and that the first task I shall take in hand will be the breakfast-room, where I shall make a thorough clear-up."



STAR-NOSE OF THE UNDERWAYS

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "The Secret Trails," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

HE was in a darkness that was dense, absolute, palpable, and his eyes were shut tight, though it made no difference, under the circumstances, whether they were shut or open. But if his sense of sight was for the moment off duty, its absence was more than compensated for by the extreme alertness of his other senses. To his supersensitive nostrils the black, peaty soil surrounding him was full of distinct and varying scents. His ears could detect and locate the wriggling of a fat grub, the unctuous withdrawal of a startled earthworm. Above all, his sense of touch was so extraordinarily developed that it might have served him for eyes, ears, and nostrils all in one. And so it came about that there in the blackness of his close and narrow tunnel, deep in the black soil of the swamp, he was not imprisoned, but free and at large as the swift hares gambolling overhead—far freer, indeed, because secure from the menace of prowling and swooping foes.

Star-Nose was a mole. But he was not an ordinary mole of the dry uplands and well-drained meadows, by any means, or he would not have been running his deep tunnel here in the cool, almost swampy

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soil within a few yards of the meandering channel of the Lost-Water. In shape and colour he was not unlike the common mole, with his thick, powerful neck of about the same size as his body, his great, long-clawed, immensely strong, hand-like fore-feet, and his mellow, velvety, shadowy, grey-brown fur. But his tail was much longer and thicker at the base than that of his plebeian cousin of the lawns, and his nose—*that* was something of a distinction which no other beast in the world, great or small, could boast of. From all around its tip radiated a fringe of feelers, no less than twenty-two in number, naked, flexible, miraculously sensitive, each one a little nailless, interrogating finger. It entitled him, beyond question, to the unique title of Star-Nose.

This tireless worker in the dark was driving a new tunnel, partly, no doubt, for the sake of worms, grubs, and pupæ which he might find on the way, and partly for purposes known only to himself. At the level where he was digging, a scant foot below the surface, the mould, though damp, was fairly light and workable, owing to the abundance of fine roots and decayed leafage mixed through it, and his progress was astonishingly rapid.

His method of driving his unseen tunnel was practical and effective. With back arched so as to throw the full force of it into his fore-shoulders, with his hind feet wide apart and drawn well up beneath him, he dug mightily into the damp soil straight before his nose with the long, penetrating claws of his exaggerated and powerful fore-paws. In great swift handfuls—for his fore-paws were more like hands than feet—the loosened earth was thrown behind him, passing under his body and out between his roomily straddling hind legs. And as he dug he worked in a circle, enlarging the tunnel-head to a diameter of about two and a half inches, at the same time pressing the walls firm and hard with his body, so that they should not cave in upon him. This compacting process further enlarged the tunnel to about three inches, which was the space he felt he needed for quick and free movement. When he had accumulated behind him as much loose earth as he could comfortably handle, he turned around, and with his head and chest and forearms pushed the mass before him along the tunnel to the foot of his last dump-hole—an abrupt shaft leading to the upper air. Up this shaft he would thrust his burden, and heave it forth among the grass and weeds, a conspicuous and contemptuous challenge to would-be pursuers. He did not care how many of his enemies might thus be notified of his address, for he knew he could always change it with baffling celerity, blocking up his tunnels behind him as he went.

And now, finding that at his present depth the meadow soil at this point was not well stocked with such game—grubs and worms—as he chose to hunt, he slanted his tunnel slightly upward to get among the grass-roots near the surface. Almost immediately he was rewarded. He cut into the pipe-like canal of a large earth-worm, just in time to intercept its desperate retreat. It was one of those stout, dark-purplish lobworms that feed in rich soil, and to him the most toothsome of morsels. In spite of the eagerness of his appetite, he drew it forth most delicately and gradually from its canal, lest it should break in two and the half of it escape him. Dragging it back into his tunnel, he held it with his big, inexorable "hands," and felt it over gleefully with that restless star of fingers which adorned the tip of his nose. Then he tore it into short pieces, bolted it hurriedly, and fell to work again upon his tunnelling. But now, having come among the grass-roots, he was in a good hunting-ground, and his work was continually interrupted by feasting. At one moment it would be a huge, fat white grub as thick as a man's little finger, with a hard, light-copper-coloured head; at the next a heavy, liver-coloured lobworm. His appetite seemed insatiable, but at last he felt he had had enough for the moment. He stopped tunnelling, turned back a few inches, drove a short shaft to the surface as a new exit, and heaved forth a mighty load of *débris*.

In the outer world it was high morning, and the strong sunlight glowed softly down through the tangled grasses of the water-meadow. The eyes of Star-Nose were just two tiny black beads almost hidden in fur, but after he had blinked them for a second or two in the sudden light, he could see quite effectively—much better, indeed, than his cousin, the common mole of the uplands. Though by far the greater part of his strenuous life was spent in the palpable darkness of his tunnels in the under-world, daylight, none the less, was by no means distasteful to him, and he was not averse to a few minutes of basking in the tempered sun. As he sat stroking his fine fur with those restless fingers of his nose, and scratching himself luxuriously with his capable claws, a big grasshopper, dropping from

one of its aimless leaps, fell close beside him, bearing down with it a long blade of grass which it had clutched at in its descent. Star-Nose seized the unlucky hopper in a flash, tore off its hard inedible legs, and started to eat it. At that instant, however, a faint swish of wings caught his ear and a swift shadow passed over him. At the touch of that shadow—as if it had been solid and released an oiled spring within his mechanism—he dived back into his hole; and the swooping marsh-hawk, after a savage but futile clutch at the vanishing tip of his tail, wheeled off with a yelp of disappointment.

It was certainly a narrow shave, and for perhaps a whole half minute Star-Nose, with his heart thumping, crouched in his refuge. Then, remembering the toothsome prize which he had been forced to abandon, he put forth his head warily to reconnoitre. The hawk was gone, but the dead grasshopper was still there, green and glistening in the sun, and a burly blue-bottle had just alighted upon it. Star-Nose crept forth cautiously to retrieve his prey.

Now, at this same moment, as luck would have it, gliding along one of the tiny runways of the meadow-mice, came a foraging mole-shrew, a pugnacious cousin of the Star-Nose tribe. The mole-shrew was distinctly smaller than Star-Nose, and handicapped with such defective vision that he had to do all his hunting by scent and sound and touch. He smelt the dead grasshopper at once, and came straight for it, heedless of whatever might stand in the way.

Under other circumstances Star-Nose might have carelessly stood aside, not through lack of courage, but because he had no special love of fighting for its own sake, and he knew that his cousin, though so much smaller and lighter than himself, was much to be respected as an opponent, by reason of his blind ferocity and dauntless tenacity. But he was no weakling, to let himself be robbed of his lawful prey. He whipped out of his hole, flung himself upon the prize, and lifted his head just in time to receive the furious spring of his assailant.

Between two such fighters there was no fencing. The mole-shrew secured a grip upon the side of the immensely thick and muscular neck of his antagonist, and immediately began to worry and tear like a terrier. But Star-Nose, flexible as an eel, set his deadly teeth into the side of his assailant's head, a little behind the ear, and worked in deeper and deeper, after the manner of a bulldog. For a few seconds, in that death-grapple, the two rolled over and over, thrashing the grass-stems. Then the long teeth of Star-Nose bit in to the brain, and the mole-shrew's body, after a convulsive stiffening, went suddenly limp.

But the disturbance in the grass—there being no wind that golden morning—had not escaped the eyes of the foraging marsh-hawk. She came winnowing back to learn the cause of it. The sun being behind her, however, her ominous shadow swept over the grass before her, and Star-Nose, unfailingly vigilant even in the moment of victory, caught sight of it coming. He loosed his hold on his dead adversary and plunged for the hole—at least, he tried to plunge for it. But the plunge was little more than a crawl, for the teeth of the mole-shrew, set deep in his neck, had locked themselves fast in death, and all that Star-Nose could do was to drag the body with him. This, however, he succeeded in doing so effectively that he was in time to back down into the hole, out of reach, just as the hawk swooped and struck.

The clutching talons of the great bird fixed themselves firmly in the protruding hindquarters of the mole-shrew, and she attempted to rise with her capture. But to her amazed indignation the prize resisted. Star-Nose was holding on to the walls of his tunnel with all the strength of his powerful claws, while at the same time struggling desperately to tear himself loose from the grip of those dead teeth in his neck. The contest, however, was but momentary. The strength of Star-Nose was a small thing against the furious beating of those great wings, and in two or three seconds, unable either to hold on or to free himself from the fatal incubus of his victim, he was dragged forth ignominiously and swept into the air, squirming and dangling at the tip of the dead mole-shrew's snout.

Star-Nose was vaguely conscious of a chill rush of air, of a sudden dazzling glare of gold and blue, as the victorious hawk flapped off towards the nearest tree-top with her prize. Then suddenly the grip of the dead jaws relaxed, and he felt himself falling. Fortunately for him, the hawk had not risen to any great height, for the marsh-hawk, hunter of meadow-mice and such secretive quarry, does not, as a rule, fly high. He felt himself turn over and over in the air, dizzily, and then he landed, with a stupefying swish, in a dense bed of wild

parsnips. He crashed right through, of course, but the strong stems broke his fall, and he was little the worse for the stupendous adventure. For a few moments he lay half stunned. Then, pulling himself together, he fell to digging with all his might, caring only to escape from a glaring outer world which seemed so full of tumultuous and altogether bewildering perils. His fore-paws made the earth fly in a shower, and in an unbelievably brief space of time he had buried himself till even the tip of his tail was out of sight. But even then he was not content. He dug on frantically till he was a good foot beneath the surface and perhaps a couple of feet more from the entrance. Then, leaving the passage safely blocked behind him, he enlarged the tunnel to a small chamber, and curled himself up to lick his wounds and recover from his fright.

It was perhaps half an hour before Star-Nose completely regained his composure and his appetite. His appetite—that was his first consideration. And second to that—a poor second—was his need of tunnelling back into his familiar maze of underground passages. Resuming his digging with full vigour, he first ran a new dump shaft to the surface, gathering several fat grubs in his progress through the grass roots. Then, at about six inches below the surface—a depth at which he could count upon the best foraging—he began to drive his tunnel. His sense of direction was unerring, which was the more inexplicable, as, there in the thick dark, he could have no landmarks to guide him. He headed straight for the point which would, by the shortest distance, join him up with his own underways.

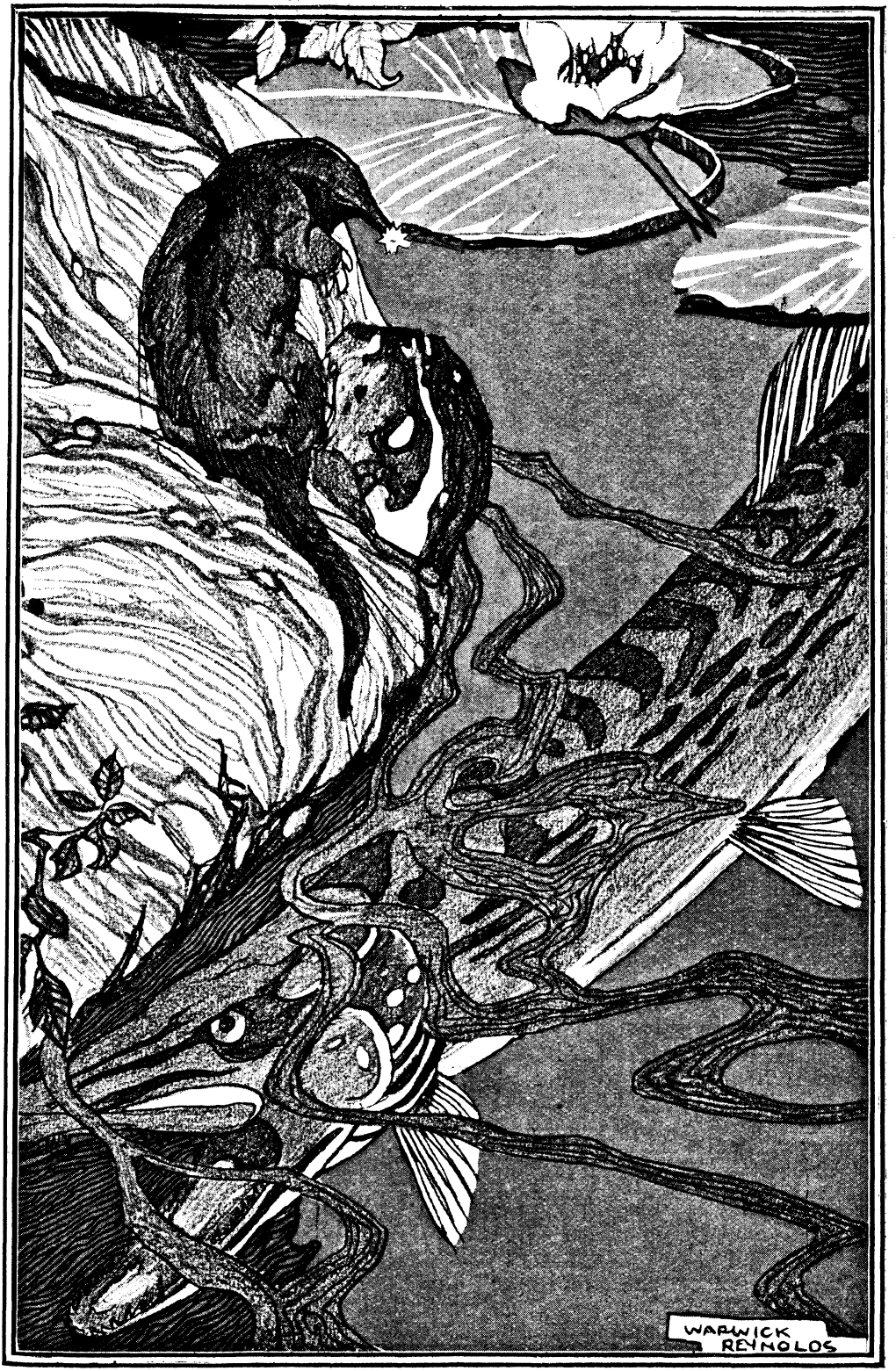
It happened, however, that in that terrible journey of his through the upper air, the swift flight of the hawk had carried him some distance and across the course of a sluggish meadow brook, a tributary of the Lost-Water. Suddenly and unexpectedly his vigorous tunnelling brought him to this obstacle. The darkness before him gave way to a glimmer of light. He hesitated, and then burrowed on more cautiously. A screen of matted grass-roots confronted him, stabbed through with needles of sharp gold which quivered dazzlingly. Warily he dug through the screen, thrust forth his nose, and found himself looking down upon a shimmering glare of quiet water, about a foot below him.

Glancing upwards to see if there were any more terrible wings in the air above, Star-Nose perceived, to his deep satisfaction, that the steep bank was overhung by a mat of pink-blossomed wild-roses, humming drowsily with bees. The concealment from directly overhead was perfect. Reassured upon this point, he crawled forth, intending to swim the bright channel and continue his tunnel upon the other side. The water itself was no obstacle to him, for he could swim and dive like a musk-rat. He was just about to plunge in, when under his very nose popped up a black, triangular, furry head with fiercely bright, hard eyes, and lips curled back hungrily from long and keen white fangs. With amazing dexterity he doubled back upon himself straight up the slope, and dived into his burrow; and the mink, springing after him, was just in time to snap vainly at the vanishing tip of his tail.

The mink was both hungry and bad-tempered, having just missed a fish which he was hunting amid the tangle of water-weeds along the muddy bottom of the stream. Angrily he jammed his sharp snout into the mouth of the tunnel, but the passage was much too small for him, and Star-Nose was well out of reach. He himself could dig a burrow when put to it, but he knew that in this art he was no match for the expert little fugitive. Moreover, keen though was his appetite, he was not over-anxious to allay it with the rank and stringy flesh of the Underground One. He shook his head with a sniff and a snarl, brushed the earth from his muzzle, and slipped off swiftly and soundlessly to seek more succulent prey.

It was ten or fifteen minutes before Star-Nose again ventured forth into the perilous daylight. His last adventure had not in the least upset him, for to his way of thinking a miss was as good as a mile. But he was hungry, as usual, and he had found good hunting in the warm light soil just under the roots of the wild-rose bushes along the bank. At length his desires once more turned towards the home tunnels. He poked his starry nose out through the hole in the bank, made sure that there were no enemies in sight, slipped down to the water's edge, and glided in as noiselessly as if he had been oiled. He had no mind to make a splash, lest he should advertise his movements to some voracious pike which might be lurking beneath that green patch of water-lily leaves a little farther upstream.

Deep below the shining surface he swam, straight and strong, through a world of



"He glanced back, and saw a long grey shadow, with terrible jaws and staring round eyes, dart past the spot from which he had just emerged."

shimmering and pellucid gold, roofed by a close, flat, white sky of diaphanous silver, upon which every fallen rose-petal or drowning fly or moth was shown with amazing clearness. As he reached the opposite shore and clambered nimbly up through that flat silver sky, he glanced back, and saw a long grey shadow, with terrible jaws and staring round eyes, dart past the spot from which he had just emerged. The great pike beneath the lily-pads had caught sight of him, after all—but too late! Star-Rose shook himself, and sat basking for a few moments in the comfortable warmth, complacently combing his face with his nimble fore-paws. He had an easy contempt for the pike, because it could not leave the water to pursue him.

* * * * *

Some fifty yards away, on the side of the brook from which Star-Nose had just come, beside a tiny pool in the deeps of the grass, stood an immense bird of a pale bluish-grey colour, motionless as a stone, on the watch for unwary frogs. Though the rich grasses were about two feet in height, the blue heron towered another clear two feet above them. He was all length—long stilt-like legs, long snake-like neck, long dagger-like bill, and a fine arrogant crest of long, slim, delicate plumes. All about him spread the warm and sun-steeped sea of the meadow-grass, starred thick with blooms of purple vetch and crimson clover and sultry orange lilies, droning sleepily with bees and flies, steaming with summer scents, and liquidly musical with the songs of the fluttering black-and-white bobolinks, like tangled peals of tiny silver bells. But nothing of this intoxicating beauty did the great heron heed. Rigid and decorative, as if he had just stepped down from a Japanese screen, his fierce, unwinking, jewel-bright eyes were intent upon the pool at his feet. His whole statuesque being was concentrated upon the subject of frogs.

But the frogs in that particular pool had taken warning. Not one would show himself so long as that inexorable blue shape of death remained in sight. Nor did a single meadow-mouse stir amid the grass-roots for yards about the pool; for word of the watching doom had gone abroad. And presently the great heron, grown tired of such poor hunting, lifted his broad wings, sprang lazily into the air, and went flapping away slowly over the grass-tops, trailing his long legs stiffly behind him. He headed for the other side of the brook and fresh hunting-grounds.

At the first lift of those great pale wings Star-Nose had detected this new and appalling peril. By good luck he was sitting on a patch of bare earth, where the overhanging turf had given way some days before. Frantically he began to dig himself in. The soft earth flew from under his desperate paws. The piercing eyes of the heron detected the curious disturbance, and he winged swiftly for the spot.

But Star-Nose, in his vigilance, had gained a good start. In about as much time as it takes to tell it, he was already buried to his own length. And then, to his terror, he came plump upon an impenetrable obstacle—an old mooring-stake driven deep into the soil. In a sweat of panic he swerved off to the left and tunnelled madly almost at right angles to the entrance.

And just this it was—a part of his wonderful luck on this eventful day—that turned to his salvation. Dropping swiftly to the entrance of the all-too-shallow tunnel, the great heron, his head bent sideways, peered into the hole with one implacable eye. Then drawing back his neck till it was like a coiled spring, he darted his murderous bill deep into the hole.

Had it not been for the old mooring-stake, which compelled him to change direction, Star-Nose would have been neatly impaled, plucked forth, hammered to death, and devoured. As it was, the dreadful weapon merely grazed the top of his rump—scoring, indeed, a crimson gash—and struck with a terrifying thud upon the hard wood of the stake. The impact gave the heron a nasty jar. He drew his head back abruptly and shook it hard in his indignant surprise. Then, trying to look as if nothing unusual had happened, he stepped down into the water with lofty deliberation and composed himself to watch for fish. At this moment the big pike came swimming past again, hoping for another chance at the elusive Star-Nose. He was much too heavy a fish for the heron to manage, of course, but the heron, in his wrath, stabbed down upon him vindictively. There was a moment's struggle which made the quiet water boil. Then the frightened fish tore himself free and darted off, with a great red wound in his silver-grey side, to hide and sulk under the lily-pads.

In the meantime Star-Nose, though smarting from that raw but superficial gash upon his hindquarters, was burrowing away

with concentrated zeal. He had once more changed direction, and was heading, as true as if by compass, for the nearest point of the home-galleries. He was not even taking time to drive dump-shafts at the customary intervals, but was letting the tunnel fill up behind him, as if sure that he was going to have no further use for it. He just wanted to get home. Of course, he might have travelled much faster above ground; but the too-exciting events of the past few hours had convinced him that, for this particular day at least, the upper world of sun and air was not exactly a health resort for a dweller in the underways. Through all his excitement, however, and all his eagerness for the safe home burrows, his unquenchable appetite remained with him; and, running his tunnel as close to the surface as he could without actually emerging, he picked up plenty of worms and grubs and fat, helpless pupæ as he went.

It was past noon, and the strong sunshine, beating straight down through the grass and soaking through the matted roots, was making a close but sweet and earthy-scented warmth in the tunnel, when at last Star-Nose broke through into one of his familiar passages, well-trodden by the feet of his tribe. Not by sight, of course—for the darkness was black as pitch—but by the comfortable smell he knew exactly where he was. Without hesitation he turned to the left and scurried along, as fast as he could, for the big central burrow, or lodge, where his tribe had their headquarters and their nests. The path forked and reforked continually, but he was never for one instant at a loss. Here and there a ray of green-and-gold light flashed down upon him, as he ran past one of the exit-shafts. And then, his heart beating with his haste and his joy, he came forth into a roomy, lightless chamber, thick with warmth and musky smells, and filled with the pleasant rustlings and small contented squealings of his own gregarious tribe.

THE WINTER SLEEP.

THE frost is here, and the ice is on the roads, the wind
Blows bitterly;
And the earth foreshadows yet no choric flowers to bind,
Dear one, for thee.

She sleeps; she dreams till April sound his passionate pipe,
The thrush his flute;
But our love sleeps no winter sleep: yearlong hangs ripe
Its golden fruit.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

By CHARLES INGE

ILLUSTRATED BY LILIAN HOCKNELL

IN moments of humorous self-pity they called him "The Rajah," because a wealthy godmother had settled on him a thousand pounds' worth of War Loan, the interest to be applied to his benefit and pleasure during his minority; and they—his parents—were trying to live up to inherited traditions upon the pay of a junior post at the India Office, in Whitehall. Consequently, while George Travers slept on his trousers to make them last, and Muriel Travers spent a good deal of eyesight on refashioning frocks, Peter Travers—aged four—went clothed in materials of worth and garments of design—a Rajah among his poorer subjects.

In the beginning the gift had produced many joyous discussions between George and Muriel—Muriel leading. The godmother was her friend. The first half-year's interest had uplifted her dangerously, and the glories of spending had sown within her the tares of pride, which grew like all ill weeds when the garments of design in materials of worth came home and were taken into wear by her small son. The second half-year's interest came almost too soon.

She managed, with determination, to compile a list of absolute needs, but only to the extent of about half the money, and in her novel perplexity had trespassed upon the half-hour after dinner devoted to the making and drinking of coffee to demand George's advice as to the remainder.

"Bank," said George, having that day achieved a cheque for the quarter's rent; and then with conscientious caution: "I dare say I can arrange for a separate account under your control."

"But this is income, not capital."

"Rich people invest their surplus income."

It was a statement of higher finance, quite emotionless, because George had seen the expression on his wife's compact little face—an expression almost prim it was, a sort of gathering up of all the small features into control. He had seen it before, when a certain Mrs. Macready had suggested that they should come to her as paying guests to save the expense of a separate establishment. Then came the expected outburst:

"But Peter gets no pleasure out of investing."

"But he gets benefit—hereafter."

"Oh, yes."

He was silent. Had not the Church been fighting for centuries such contemptuous indifference to the future? Moreover, the spill in his book on the fireside table called invitingly for the insertion of his thumb, whereby he could open the fairyland of other people's troubles and so escape his own. He was by no means as unsympathetic as his appearance, which was inclined to be wooden, but he always required a day or so to recover from the payment of the quarter's rent. It was only achieved with finesse.

Muriel, with feminine diplomacy, allowed him to get interested; watched the little furrow smooth out between his heavy eyebrows; saw the line adown his thick moustache soften, and then struck with all the rush of an inspiration:

"'Benefit and pleasure,' it said. That includes playthings, of course. George! It includes playthings."

"D'y mean toys?"

"Playthings is more legal."

The discussion was a one-sided affair. George wanted to get back to his book. His acquiescence was not at all convincing. But Muriel did not want conviction, only the merest hint of agreement which could be twisted to her own ambitions both in

present action and in future defence of that action. So it came about that the separate banking account was not needed; and Peter surpassed his young friends in toys, as he surpassed his parents in raiment. The plain white-wood truck that could be, at will, a motor-car, a steam-engine, or a coal-cart full of coals, was discarded for a clockwork locomotive so bepainted as to be impossible of change even to the imagination of a child.

In defence Muriel said, quite scornfully, that what he lost in imagination he gained in prestige, and prestige was more important. By such sophistries she managed to deflect those intermittent protests of her husband until the day came round when Peter's birthday had to be discussed.

George came to the Sunday morning topic rebellious. He had made a discovery the night before.

Each year he compiled, and endeavoured to abide by, a detailed estimate of expenditure. It was the only way. Not that he ever succeeded in keeping to his figures; but it acted as a check. So exceptional was it for any item to be within his estimate, that when he discovered that the small sum allowed for Peter's presents was unspent, his conscience—that is, his pride, his affection for his small son, his share of the universal joy in generosity—accused him. Peter's birthday came in August, and heretofore the balance available for Christmas had always been severely hypothecated. This year he had spent nothing.

Muriel tried rush tactics with a superior air. "That's all right, old dear, I've got a bit of balance left; and he so longs to have a horse and cart."

"Well, let's give him a horse and cart."

"You've got some marmalade on your waistcoat. He wants one with the horse to come out. Real harness, you know. *Très.* Oh, awfully *très!*"

Très was the word the Traverses had hit upon to avoid the more sordid discussion of economy. By all the rules of the treaty, made before even they had achieved the Liliputian flat near Kensington Gardens, George should have bowed to the irrevocable. The word was not to be lightly used. But her tone made it an abuse.

"Rot! He can pretend about the harness. I want to give him a present."

Rush tactics having failed, Muriel settled down to her attack. "Dear! There is still some marmalade. The second button. He has so set his heart on this one."

"Have you chosen, then, already?" His tone might have been due to his effort to see and clean his second button. But she replied with propitiation:

"Well, we have seen one."

George looked up across the fern, gathering his dignity for a protest. It was to have been an expression of independence, a brave pronouncement of his right to buy his son a present. Then he remembered the date—August 29—one month from quarter day, and also, because these things are never remembered singly, that his half-yearly premiums were due in October.

Muriel, watching, saw the check, the irritation, and pushed in: "You silly old thing! All we want is Peter's happiness."

"But is it happiness?"

"Well, pleasure. Never mind the metaphysics. If he has set his heart on this, and it is *très*—why, we ought to be jolly glad that the circumstances permit."

"I am beginning to wish——"

"But you don't want to penalise Peter just because——"

"But I want the pleasure of giving him a present. Before this infernal thing came along——"

"George!"

"We used to save up."

"And now we don't need to, thanks to dear old B."

George was taking a cigarette from the wedding-present box on the sideboard. "We used to ration ourselves for cigarettes a month before——"

"And now Peter gets his toys and we get our cigarettes. Throw me one. Don't get faddy, dear! You can give him something."

"And have him think it paltry. You know how children compare."

She skirted adroitly round such a truth, and passed on to victory. There was no real achievement in it. George was beaten from the start, and knew it. That made his acquiescence a grievance instead of a concession. It stayed with him.

This was gradual, but it was definite. Before even Muriel had realised it, he had got into a habit of a read and smoke in the dining-room when he came home, and only appeared to say "Good night" when Peter was bathed and garbed for bed.

Then one day his son's dressing-gown—a jolly little replica of his own, only more magnificent, caught the taint and became a reproach. Muriel got irritated as one whose indulgence is threatened. Besides,

she had been rather overdoing it. Each little garment, his boots and shoes, his hats and gloves, were all exactly right and all delightful. But, with the habit of spending, she found the wealth of a year ago was wealth no longer. She had a bill. True, it was only some four pounds for pyjamas, but it was a bill. And Christmas was coming.

So they drifted apart on either side of their small son's fortune, getting polite to each other and making a lip-service of endearments. George seemed to get more polite and more remote each day. Muriel competed, but began to get irritable and despondent. He was altogether too silent, and silence made her imagine things. So much so that she got quite panicked when he called her to his writing-table one evening, requesting her signature to some papers he had been studying.

"Some business papers. You'll see where to sign," he said, making way for her.

But she did not sit down at once. "George, you aren't selling out?"

It was an illogical accusation, part nerves, part hurt feelings, because she did not in the least know what constituted selling out. She had the expression from hearsay.

He made her wish for some of his old complaints: "Where your initials are pencilled. What I have got to sell out would not make much difference."

She signed tragically, quite satisfied she was abetting an action that meant disaster. She had got so inured to the easy spending of Peter's fortune, and to the greater personal affluence of her own unencumbered allowance, that money affairs had lost their old significance. The episode subdued her, more especially as she was very soon watching a change in George. He picked up again their talks about Peter. His politeness lifted; she recorded at least twice when he was rude to her. And then one day she came home to find him playing with Peter as of old. It reinforced her fear, because he was always more affectionate in difficulties. But she accepted the return of his attentions recklessly. The change was so welcome. Yet, for all it brought back of the old precious companionship, it made of her lately-acquired pride a temptation.

Peter led her into it, though hers was the initial blunder. On the very day the Christmas bazaar opened she took him there, and straightway, undeterred by all the decorated display, his desire fastened on a butcher's shop. He was interested in the other wonders, even impressed by some, but he always came back to the butcher's shop. They chose it, discussed it, and he demanded that he should discuss it with his father.

"You mustn't," she told him, as they emerged into the prosaic realities of the millinery department.

"Why?"

"Because you mustn't."

"But why? Isn't Daddie interested in my toys?"

"Oh, yes, dear! Yes! But Daddie's got an awful lot to think about just now. He works awfully hard, you see."

"He doesn't work at home. I could tell him when he comes home. May I? To-night, Mummie? Please!"

Her firm, rather guilty refusal was received, as they left the shop, with a drooping of the small mouth and a quavered protest: "I do so want to s'cuss it with him."

Before she realised all the pitfalls of childish logic, she was committed to a wholly unauthorised version of the duties of fathers at Christmas-time, which not only reduced George's importance, but got woefully entangled in a mystifying confusion between Father Christmas and fathers at Christmas. Her story made her wretched until George came home, and then it made her worse. For he, with his affectionate attentions and his chaff of Peter, seemed quite gay, and she sensed difficulties in proportion to his light-heartedness. If only he were not so touchy about Peter's money, she could have told him there and then. As it was, she had to justify her want of courage with fierce determinations that, whatever their own difficulties, the butcher's shop should be bought.

It became a dilemma, because Peter began to clamour, with unanswerable logic, for the date of purchase.

"Supposing some other little boy was to want it? What if his mother bought it for him? Supposing, Mummie?"

This sort of cross-examination, reinforced each day with an urgent appeal for immediate purchase, harassed her, because it was just the catastrophe she feared herself; and she could not bring herself to tell George, nor had she ever heard of running an account for toys. Moreover, she had frequent panics, because Peter, while observing faithfully their conspiracy of silence, showed a distinct tendency to discuss butcher's shops in the abstract with the world at large. On more than one occasion she thought George must take notice. For about a week she endured, resisting her

small son's appeal, usually delivered on the doorstep as they went out, and continued intermittently, with a child's unabashed persistence, during the morning's shopping. At last one day she surrendered and pledged herself to action on the morrow. His delight passed over her unheeded, for she would have to tell George now. The thing had grown, with concealment, out of all proportion. It would, of course, bring on his own disclosure.

She heard his key in the door that evening with actual dread. His romp with Peter she watched tragically. At dinner she talked gaily, if hectically, about everything in which she was not interested. The making of coffee was an ordeal, because after coffee she would have to make her confession. It had come to be a confession now.

He remarked upon her flow of words: "Had some chum to tea, or what?"

"It's you who are light-hearted. I'm very worried, really."

"Best way to take it, anyway. What is it?" He leaned across to pat her knee. "He takes after you in that. Knocked his head badly at footer this evening, and never said a word."

This tribute to their small son and her own fictitious fortitude shamed her into an opening, whatever it might bring: "I want to talk to you about him, dear."

He was at once alarmed. "What? Nothing wrong?"

"No, no! Dear me, no! He's never been better. Only——" Having started, she still lacked courage. "We shall need to be very



"His desire fastened on a butcher's shop."

careful of him, dear. I mean, as regards his temperament."

"Oh, that! That's all right. He must make his own."

"He gets so set on things." That was a good opening—the inspiration of embarrassment.

"So much the better. He will learn to fight for what he wants."

"Ah, but not just yet, dear. He is so young."

"What d'you mean?"

He was looking at her now with interest. Now there was no going back. She leaned across, in her turn, striving with a smile to make him an accomplice in concealment. "Shall I confess first? You won't be stuffy, George?"

His was a non-committal sound, though his usual suspicion of her wiles was as yet in abeyance. She repeated her smile.

"I have a disclosure to make, too."

"Fire away."

"Well, Christmas is coming."

"It always is."

"Well—I think I'll do it here." She slid down on to the stool between them and leaned against his knee. "Well——"

"Like the story of the three holes in the ground. Go on, dear."

"Why, what's that?" She still clutched at a respite.

"Well, well, well. But fire away.'"

"Well—— I'm sorry; I didn't mean that. But Christmas means presents."

His hand was on her shoulder. "Don't make it too stiff, dear. I've had an exceptional expenditure—lately."

That set her off at last, fearful lest he should get his disclosure in first: "Oh, it's not me, George! Anything will do for me! It's Peter. He has seen—we have seen—a butcher's shop he wants. He has set his heart on it. It is much too *très* for us, and as he really has money of his own, and it is Christmas-time, I thought . . . Do you mind very much? I mean, if I bought it . . . Of course I know . . . But it is Christmas—and he has so set his heart on it. Do you mind? There! It's out!"

Silence behind her. So long that she had to slew round to look. He was staring over her head.

"George!"

He still stared over her. "I hadn't thought of that. Christmas presents always used to be a surprise; but it's odd."

"What is? We can get it with his own money. The interest is due at the end of the year. Only you have always seemed so touchy—I don't mean that quite—so—oh, you know what I mean. But whatever our financial difficulties, he has his own money to spend."

"He hasn't."

"What?"

A sudden fear took hold of her. Was it possible? She had never thought of that. It calmed her immediately.

"George, what do you mean? Tell me."

His voice came very slowly, almost offhand to her, gripped in her horrible foreboding: "You see, we have signed an authority to the bank to reinvest his dividends. He cannot touch it now unless we rescind that authority—both of us." Then he, in his turn, tried to make her an accomplice, though almost cheerfully. "Don't you remember? Those business papers."

Silence on her part this time—a silence of relief and of instant injured understanding. Then her voice in panic: "But his present? His Christmas present, George?"

Again his voice, absurdly cheerful: "That's all right. But it's distinctly odd. I bought him a butcher's shop yesterday."

* * * * *

Said Peter, in further accusation, when he heard: "Why didn't you tell me, Mummie, that Daddie knew all the time?"

MYSTERY

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

A FLOCK of butterflies was half-way across the great river. One vivid beam, falling from the crowding clouds, showed them dazzling as fire-flakes against the wall of the forest. Then came the tropic shower. The far banks and the rosy roofs of Chuelo went out in an instant. When it cleared five minutes later, there were no more butterflies.

Dumornay scowled at the forest. "Yes," he said, "and you'd wipe out a hundred men, and their hearts and their hopes, just as easy as that!" He went aft to where Forbes Mason, the archæologist, lay under the awning, feeding a tame tamarin with bananas. "Surely, surely," he said uneasily, "it's time they came?"

Mason looked up at him under wrinkled brows, and the tiny black elf of a monkey copied the movement faithfully. "Stanning's been in there," he went on, "for nearly a year!"

Mason rose slowly and they paced forward together. The tamarin fled shoreward by one of the hawsers that moored the steamer to the forest trees on the bank. "When you've served Science as long as I have . . ." began Mason. But Dumornay was not listening.

For weeks they had lain there, waiting by arrangement to pick up Stanning's expedition on its return from Comaque, the lost city of the interior. Stanning had not come, nor any news of him, since that day when he had plunged into the jungle—the jungle that remained implacable in its mystery as the sea.

"I'd have given five years of my life to go with him," went on Dumornay, "but this waiting is getting on my nerves! The forest and the river seem to *know*, and I keep watching them, wondering when they'll let out a word or a sign. Think what hangs on Stanning's success, apart from any question of personal safety. Why, if they find this legendary inscription, it may unlock the mystery of the South American hieroglyphs from Palenque to Peru, as the Rosetta Stone unlocked the mystery of Egypt! But . . . the forest's against him . . . against us! Don't you feel it?" He laughed uneasily. "I'll go and take some quinine. I'm all to bits with the suspense. I feel all ready to jump when they come, as if there'd be a *crash* . . ."

He stopped as if his life had stopped. There was no sound but the faint perpetual voice of the water alongside. Yet on the instant the jungle had spoken to him—the silent revelation had been made. He gasped out: "Mason! Great Heaven! It's *come!*"

Such things do come sometimes, downstream to Chuelo of the red roofs—such things as the small dug-out yawing slowly in the current. In the bottom a man lay, both hands clasped about a rusty tin box. And that was all.

"You win this time!" said Dumornay through his teeth to the forest.

Even when the dug-out was caught, and the man lifted out and carried to the cabin, Dumornay was aware of that pervading spirit. In the hours that followed, it was the forest he fought. The forest was trying to pull the man out of their hold, and they fought to keep him. They won so much. With the dawn he woke, and looked at them sanely in the light of the moth-clouded lamp. For the first time they thought of his identity. Mason said: "It's Shand, the young photographer."

Dumornay, a dripping ghost stripped to his pyjama trousers, spooned beef-extract into Shand's mouth. He telegraphed to Mason: "What's happened?" An almost uncontrollable curiosity fired both men.

Mason leaned over the cot, and he was trembling. "Shand," he called, as if to someone at a distance, "Shand, where's Stanning?"

"Well," whispered Shand, "my heart's in a muddle, but I'll try and tell you. You know the falls of the fifth tributary of the Monacillo?" He broke off, staring at them helplessly. "No, of course you don't. But, anyway, it's there we buried Dr. Stanning."

He looked at Mason. "Am I the only one that's come out?" he cried. "Am I the *only* one?"

Mason's face answered him. He turned on his side and wept like a child.

Simply as a child, he said presently: "That's done me good. I feel better. Is my box safe?"

"Quite safe." Questions he dared not ask, lest they should snap that slender thread of recollection that had survived the forests, trembled on Mason's lips. Shand picked at the sheet restlessly.

"Could I have it in here?" he asked.

The box was brought. His bony hands clasped it. He shut his eyes. Looking at the contented smile on the ghost of a face where the moth-shadows flickered like the shadows of flowing water, they dared not ask what it was that he had brought out.

Suddenly Shand began to speak.

"It was a long way." The whispering voice seemed to flow like the shadows and the water alongside. "A long way to Comaque. We were never out of the forests. At first we passed villages of friendly Indians, full of little brown children and tame parrots. Then there was nothing but trees.

"After a long time, steering by compass as you do at sea, we came to a hill. A forest grew on the hill, but under the forest was a city. Once, when I was a boy, I found the skeleton of a calf in the pasture, all grown over with grass and vines. It was that way the trees grew over Comaque—over its basalt roads and its great terraces, over its altars and its palaces, over its dead people and its dead gods."

He lay back, panting, on the silk-cotton pillow. Dumornay's hand closed over his, holding him against the pull of the jungle.

Presently he went on. "Dr. Stanning was wonderful. You'd have thought he'd been there before. He'd say, 'Dig here,' or 'Run a trench there,' and they'd uncover a roadway or an altar or a god. Then I'd come along and take photographs till I was ready to drop, while he sketched and measured. But what I liked best"—the shadow of the forest lifted from Shand's eyes, they grew young and tender—"what I liked best was the flowers.

"They grew all over the ruins, pink and yellow and mauve orchids, full of wild bees. I would have liked Janey to see them. Stanning had 'em thrown away like weeds. 'I've never seen such nice flowers,' I said to him. 'Aren't we goin' to take some back with us?' But he and Lewisham laughed at me. 'They're common ones,' they said. 'We've no room. Throw 'em away . . .' There were white ones all over the terrace where they found the house with the inscription."

Dumornay looked at Mason with a shock of eagerness so keen it was like pain. But Mason signalled: "Hush! Don't interrupt."

"Not worth picking, Stanning said," went on Shand wanderingly. "But they were the prettiest thing there. I hated to waste 'em. But it's like that with those scientific fellows—they don't care a tin whistle for anything outside their own line. Not that I was surprised. 'I've given the history of a continent to the world,' Stanning would say, walking the terrace under the roots of the great ceiba trees. 'Mine! All this is mine!' And we'd watch the moon rise over the forest, and the great idols grey in the dew, and the shadows of the pillars wheeling as they'd wheeled for hundreds of years, till even I could see what a tremendous thing it was."

The feeble voice failed. Moments passed. A rumbling vibration shook the steamer. Shand asked suddenly: "What's that?"

"Exhaust steam, probably."

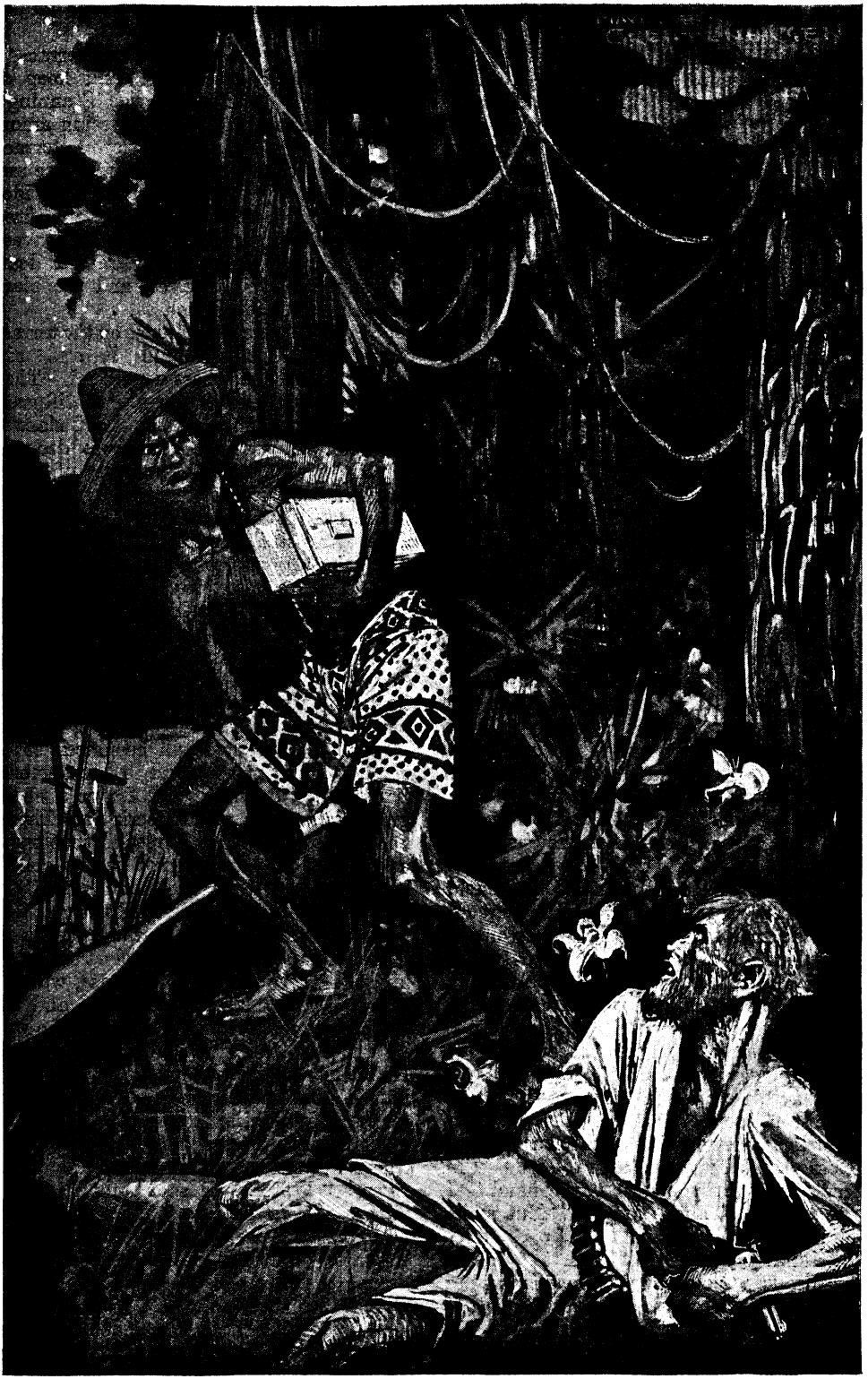
"I thought it was drums. We heard drums all the time after we left the Monacillo, as if the trees were signalling to each other, following us, closing in on us so that we'd never get out, but just stay and drown in leaves. I thought the sound came nearer, but Stanning never noticed. He'd just found—just found——"

The eyes flickered as if shadows of innumerable leaves veiled them. Holding his hand, Dumornay called clearly and insistently: "Shand! Shand, come back! Shand, what was it Stanning found?" The breath of the two men hung on the answer.

It came promptly. "It was a low stone house under the earth. There was just one long room. It had a kind of vaulted roof—I think Stanning said it was the earliest known example of the Maya arch. We were weeks clearing it. It was all laced and bound with the roots of the ceiba trees over the terrace. At the far end of the room was a carving in shadow relief, showing a great feathered god shooting arrows from a bow. Stanning said the place had been a kind of State prison, and the god was there to shoot arrows at anyone who tried to escape. And one prisoner. . ."

"One prisoner, Shand, one prisoner?"

"My head's muddled. It's all trees . . .



"He saw me live, I suppose, and sprang back."

But I think—I think the old story was true. I think it turned out to be true. One prisoner, so the story said, was a Spanish monk, brought inland for no reason anyone could find out, kept a captive there for a year, and then sacrificed to the god. But while he was in the prison he carved, low down on the dark wall, a Latin text, and under it a triple line of picture-writing . . ."

"The bilingual inscription!" said Mason under his breath. His hand shook as he measured medicine for Shand.

"Anyway, it was there," went on the shadowy, flowing voice. "I saw it—I saw it when it was clear, and not all leaves. I took about a hundred photographs of it. And Lewisham and Stanning were busy with it for a month. They were nearly heart-broken. They couldn't carry it away, as they were taking the painted cloths and the gold ornaments, and the emeralds, and the little stone tablets of the Zodiac.

"And then . . ."

Shand suddenly raised himself on his arm. Clasping the tin box, he began to talk very fast, and they could see his heart shake to and fro. "Then it was all leaves, all leaves. The trenches ran leaves instead of water. The cuttings we left, when we cleared the house under the ceibas, were all choked with green growing things in a week. The forest came walking in on us, as I knew it would—all the trees drumming to each other: 'We won't let them out, we won't let them out!' Then—then they began to shoot at us. The trees did. They shot little arrows, poisoned darts that killed at a touch.

"Stanning saw them first. He went off with four men to get us some fresh meat. I saw him go in the yellow dawn full of clouds of flashing parakeets. In the evening he came back. Only two men came with him. They had shot nothing. He held out his hand to me, and across the palm lay one of the feathered arrows.

"'*Finis*,' he said, and his face was grey as the stone faces of Comaque. 'Every way is blocked, they are closing in on us, and Rosario and Marie-Jose are dead. I'm sorry I brought you into this, Shand.' I knew he meant about Janey. 'But while we're alive, we'll work.'

"Stanning was a great man. . . In the morning we went on, making our facsimiles of the inscription, patiently adding to the records."

There was no voice for a while but the voice of the river, passing from the mystery of the forests to the mystery of the sea.

"'Make for the house on the terrace,'" shouted Shand quickly, "'and keep all together!'" His voice was Stanning's. "For the arrows fell that morning among us as we worked on the lower terrace, uncovering the basalt steps, and three men died. We lay down behind the idols guarding each step, and fired and fired. But what's the good of firing at leaves? They dripped arrows, they rained death as they did dew. Leaves, and the blank dumb gods, and dead men . . .

"Then we were in the house on the terrace, Stanning, Lewisham and I, and nine *hombres*. All the others were dead. There was not much food or water. A still green light came in through the tilted slabs of the roof. It was as if we were drowned already at the bottom of an ocean of leaves, where dumb birds gloriously painted went in and out like fish. Nothing else for a long time. And still Stanning worked.

"'There's just one chance,' he said, 'that they've left a way open—the way of retreat, the way by which we came.' We hadn't tried that—the way of retreat. He said: 'At the last we'll try if we can get out that way. Each man will carry one case of food and one case packed with the most valuable records and specimens. In each of these last will be placed copies of my descriptions and measurements, Lewisham's drawings, and Shand's photographs and plates, of the inscription. There's about one chance in a thousand that one of us will get out. I need not say to *you*'—he looked at Lewisham and me—'that you'll let your food and your lives go before you let these cases go.' He was as much our leader then as ever. He packed the cases himself—there in the stone house, with the arrows waiting for us outside, and the feathered god shooting at us from the wall. At the end there was a little room left. He let us put in what we liked. Lewisham put in gold ornaments. I put something for Janey into mine."

Shand shut his eyes, he seemed to listen. There was no sound but the sound of the river. "Water," he said faintly, after a pause. "It's bad to want water. But what was the use of trying to get down to the tank when the little arrows were waiting among the leaves? We shared and shared alike till it was all gone. Then Stanning said 'Wait.' But the men wouldn't wait. They crept down to the tank under the vanilla vines in the dark. But the dark was full of leaves—leaves or arrows, whatever

it was, killed them. They stayed there by the tank, and the dew dripped on them.

" Then Stanning said : ' This is the end.' He couldn't say it very well, his lips were so dry. He and Lewisham and I loaded ourselves with the cases of food and the other cases, and took our guns. We left the house on the terrace and stood under the ceiba roots in the broad light, and waited. Nothing happened. No arrows fell. ' It is as I thought,' said Stanning. ' They want us to go.' That is, the trees did . . . We went down to the tank and filled our bottles. No one molested us. It was good water. We were sorry we could not give our poor *hombres* to drink. Stanning looked at Comaque for the last time. His lips moved. He had forgotten us. Then we stepped into the jungle by the way we had come months before. This also was allowed us. It was as if the trees opened to let us pass in that one direction, and closed behind us, keeping Comaque and its mystery inviolate for ever.

" It was a long way—a long way from Comaque. All the way, only the trees that hated us. We steered among them by compass, as you do at sea. And the cases were very heavy."

" What then, Shand ? " called Mason gently. " What then ? "

His voice was a long time reaching Shand. " Why, nothing," said the faint whisper from the very brink of consciousness, " nothing but that. We went on and on by the way we had come. If we diverged from it, the arrows fell . . . And the cases were very heavy.

" It seemed they grew heavier, larger, as we went along. We crawled like ants ; we were bent double between the cases of records. When we fell they rolled on us and crushed us. We could not get up. We hated them. When we had to take them up in the mornings, at first we cursed, later we wept. We wept at everything—at the flies, at the stinging ants, at the trees that would not let us step aside from the thread of a path and lie down and rest, most of all at the tin cases. We were in hell, carrying them. We would have been in heaven, letting them go.

" At last, after weeks and years, we heard a sound that was not of the forest. For weeks and years it led us, a great, living, roaring voice of water. We crept towards it, swaying under the small tin cases. It was the voice of the falls on the fifth tributary of the Monacillo.

" When the trees opened, and we saw with our eyes the plunge of the green water in the sun, it made us drunk. Lewisham and I hugged each other and wept and danced. Only Dr. Stanning went away quietly and lay under a tree, with his head on his tin case. When we went to him he was dead.

" The sight of the water falling had made us mad, but it had killed him. We buried him there where he lay. It took us a long time. We buried his case with him, for we could not carry it away. Rainbows hung all over the place from the spray of the cataract. Then Lewisham and I went on and into the forest again.

" Lewisham was not much use by this time. It must have been the leaves, I think. They get right inside your head. . . . He wanted to stay by the cataract, and nearly shot me when I wouldn't let him. I said : ' It's up to us to get some copies of Dr. Stanning's work out, if we can.' By that time I didn't care a cent about the work. But I had to keep going . . . because of Janey. Besides, I'd told her I'd bring her something out of the forests. She'd have been disappointed. . . ."

His hands strayed slowly over the rusty surface of the case they clasped. Mason watched those hands almost with awe. He met Dumornay's gaze, and the eyes of both men said : " How did he do it ? "

There was no answer but the immemorial whisper of the current alongside.

" Lewisham cried a lot—first for the waterfall, and then about the case. He was always dropping it when he thought I didn't see. Then I'd go back and get it ; and when I strapped it on him again, he'd cry. By and by he stopped trying to lose it. He carried it all day, and looked at me cunningly. When I took hold of it again, it was light and empty. He'd thrown everything away—plates, records, and golden charms. After that—after that—I don't remember. It was all leaves. But soon I was alone with them.

" The trees moved with me, so that I didn't seem to advance. They never let me alone. The leaves pressed on my head. I slept as I walked. Sometimes I'd wake and find myself crawling on hands and knees, dragging the case, and telling Janey not to worry—I was bringing her her present. It wouldn't *do* to disappoint Janey. . . .

" A hundred times I tried to let the thing go. It was so heavy. That little case made a great bruise of me. My soul was bruised. It seemed more than one could bear and

live, to be so tired. A hundred times I left it. But I had to go back and get it, for fear Janey'd think I'd forgotten her." He looked at Dumornay confidentially. "It's awful easy to hurt them," he said, "when they're —fond of you. . . ."

He smiled and was silent. His lips moved. Stooping, Mason thought he heard the word "Greenhouse. . . ." "Shand!" said Mason gently. And Shand said at once: "I lay and looked up at the sky.

"Blue sky, and it meant I was out of the jungle. Janey's face could hardly have been lovelier. I didn't know if I lived or died. I lay on my back and watched the sky burn and grow tender with the night—darkening . . . With the night came a man.

"He came and pulled at the tin case. He was an Indio of the forests. He thought I was dead. He had a paddle in one hand. With the other he pulled at the straps. I did not care at all. He had the tin case in his hand when I remembered—he was taking Janey's little present.

"It made me angry. In a minute I was alive. He saw me live, I suppose, and sprang back as I twitched the barrel of the gun across my body. He turned to run with the case, hesitated, raised to his lips the blow-pipe he carried. Then I fired. I nearly fainted at the noise. When I could stand, I got up and took the case away from him. His dug-out lay on the bank of the stream by which I had fallen. I stepped into it and shoved out. The current took me. I laid the box down and lay down beside it, staring at the sky, in which were many stars.

"I remember nothing more till I woke here."

He looked vaguely at Mason, as if across an immense distance. He held out to him the tin case. "Will you take it?" he asked. "Janey's present's in it. A nice house . . . we're going to have a real nice place when we're married. She's so fond of flowers. There's to be a garden and a little greenhouse . . . so there'll be flowers for her in winter. And I've brought her some of the pink orchids to start with. There was a man along who knew how to dry 'em for transport. Stanning said they were common, but I knew she'd rather have them than anything. They're in there."

He laid the case in Mason's hands, smiled, turned on his side, and was instantly asleep.

Mason's hands, holding the case, shook a little. He and Dumornay stared at each other, aware of a spirit more indomitable than that of the forest, more eternal than the hostility of Nature—a spirit whose springs of being were more deeply veiled than the trees veiled Comaque the mysterious. "In here also," said Mason, under his breath, "is the crown of Stanning's life-work, the secret which may unlock the hidden history of a continent." He raised the case as if it were something holy. "If the contents are safe and undamaged," he went on, "there is practically no limit to the debt which archæology, ethnology, and history may owe to Shand here!"

"And he doesn't care a button for any of 'em!" said Dumornay.

Mason shook the tin case in his face. "The boy brought this out," he answered, "out of danger, and suffering, and difficulty unspeakable, because he'd set his heart on giving the girl he is going to marry a few pink cypripediums worth about two dollars a dozen!"

"That," said Dumornay softly, stooping over Shand with a gesture that was almost a caress, "is the mystery!"

THE YELLOW CLOAK

By C. M. MATHESON

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

MARJORIE RENNIE likened her brother Simon to a knightly hero of romance. Though her schooldays were ended, she had still the schoolgirl's penchant for idolising those she admired. Because of this interest and despite her flair for adventure, she settled down, on her return to Green Gables, with extreme docility.

Fully aware of the responsibility he had incurred by bringing his young sister to the lonely house, Simon had forbidden her to go beyond the wall which surrounded the grounds. But the house had its attractions for the girl, although her happy memories were overshadowed by a poignant remembrance.

From some of the windows one could see the high narrow bridge where the runaway horse had fallen, overturning the light dog-cart, hurling her father—her jovial father—into the shallow stream beneath, crushing her mother's body. One room, so well remembered, remained unaltered, unclosed, by Simon's decision. To him it had become a sanctuary; to the young girl it was a treasure place of which she never wearied.

Here was the big bed, with its rose silk curtains, its flowered quilt; the dressing-table, with its silver-backed brushes, its bottles and jars; the press, with its panelled doors half open, giving a glimpse of clothes within.

To this room she came when she needed comfort; here she stole often at night in her white bed-gown, to say her prayers as though she were a child at her mother's knee; here, too, when the sun shone and the windows stood wide, she entered to turn over and admire the treasures which the long shallow drawers, the big press, contained, and the cheval glass often reflected a charming study.

Another corner of the big house—this time a veritable corner—was also a loved retreat. Above the stairs a tall many-paned window stood in a deep recess. Without, a great lime shrouded it from the sun and tapped with eerie fingers on the glass. In the embrasure, where the unbecoming green light shone on her, Marjorie delighted to sit, shutting her eyes and listening to the tap-tap on the panes. Here, late one summer evening, she sat, so lost in her dreams that even when the voices of two women broke the silence she did not stir.

The voices, the words they uttered, were perfectly clear. Mrs. Martin, the housekeeper, was talking to her sister, who had newly settled in the village. She was talking of Simon.

"It does seem hard on him," Mrs. Martin said, in answer to a tentative remark. "Mr. Simon would make a fine husband. But there! He shuns the women. I know 'tis common talk that he stayed away from the Squire's party because she'd be there."

"'Tis said she runs after him," said the gossip. "That 'tis none of Mr. Rennie's doing at all."

"I don't believe that," answered the housekeeper. "It goes without saying any girl'd be glad to get Mr. Simon, but Miss Dalrymple isn't the sort to run after a man, especially if he avoids her."

"Miss Dalrymple can have her choice, I don't doubt. After all, she's a guest at the Hall, and Mr. Rennie's but a farmer."

"That he is not," answered the housekeeper sharply. "The Rennies are county folk's good's the Squire, only they'm poor. Mr. Simon spent all the fortune his uncle left him paying his father's debts, and now there's Miss Marjorie."

"Yes, there's Miss Marjorie," repeated the other.

"You see," said the housekeeper conversationally, "Mr. Simon and Miss Marjorie's all that's left, and Mr. Simon being what he is, he'll never think of anything but giving her all he can, even if it cost him every penny he's got to do it."

"If he went abroad, now——" volunteered the other.

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"That he'll never do. 'Twould be like tearing his heart out to take him from Green Gables."

Silence fell for a little space. Then—

"And you mean to say Mr. Simon would be after Miss Dalrymple for his wife if 'tweren't for Miss Marjorie?"

"Ay, I've no doubt o' it," said the housekeeper.

There was a sigh, Then the visitor, tasting the flavour of romance, asked—

"And how's he taking it, the poor dear? Does he eat his meals and sleep o' nights? Does he look all right?"

"He's quiet," answered the housekeeper. "He's quiet. I'll say that for en. He keeps it to himself. The Rennies was always a tight-lipped lot."

"Ay, I know the sort."

The listener on the stairs stirred. She lifted her head and looked up through the window at the tree which shaded it. Her large eyes gleamed as though through tears.

Mrs. Martin got up abruptly, saying something about a draught, and shut the door of her room. The house was steeped in silence. Marjorie rose to her feet, shivering as if she were cold, and stole up the uncarpeted shallow stairs. She went very slowly along the gallery, which was one of the features of the house, and into Simon's room.

She had expected to find him within, but he was not there. Yet he had ascended the stairs while she was sitting in the embrasure. She had looked up at him as he passed, but he had glanced over her head through the window which the great lime so shrouded. She recalled the sadness of his face.

She wondered, standing on the threshold of his room, where he might be, then closed the door again and went on her way.

She was uncertain. She approached the door of her own room, paused there, then moved from it, and went with quicker steps to the further door, which she opened very gently, turning the handle with the care of one who fears to waken a sleeper. She entered, closing the door with the same regard.

The evening light was dim, and at first she did not see that Simon was also in the room. Either her entry had been too soundless to disturb him, or he was too utterly absorbed to hear, for he did not move. Marjorie could just see his dark head on the other side of the wide bed, his thrown-out hands clasped tightly. There was something intensely painful about those close-clasped hands. As silently as she had entered she withdrew, feeling she had no right just then to be in Simon's presence.

Simon did not come to supper, and while she sat at the little round table, drawn close to the big window where, in summer, they had their meals, she thought very seriously of what she had heard and seen. Her mood was not so serious, however, that she could not eat, for she had not in all her life been presented with an insoluble problem. She was too young, too irresponsible, to be very deeply troubled. A tiny pucker between her delicate brows betokened deep thought, and her dark eyes had a far-away expression. She might have been cogitating a fairy story.

But she had seen, typified by Simon's close-clasped hands, emotion that distressed her. She was enormously sorry for Simon.

Before she went to bed she sought him again and found him in the library, writing by the light of his green-shaded lamp. As she entered he looked up gravely.

"Good night, little 'un," he said, as he kissed her. She hesitated a moment, standing with one hand on the arm of his chair. Regarding her, he recognised how she resembled the beautiful mother whom he had adored. She had the same witchery of long-lashed lids, of errant curled hair. He kissed her again very gently, and the resolve he had taken that night became adamantine.

Until she fell asleep the girl considered. No definite idea presented itself. She wished, like a child who is offered three wishes, for a purseful of money, for a knightly lover, for a castle with turrets, of her very own.

Simon had already breakfasted when she came down in the morning. He must have risen very early. Mrs. Martin said he had gone out. From the open window, as she sat, still thoughtful, playing with the food on her plate, she could see the paddock, where tall buttercups and marguerites were swaying in the light breeze.

"Just," she told herself, "as if troops of fairies were passing over them."

Perplexed, still vaguely troubled, she ascended to her mother's room. Into the still chamber the sun shone. She drew the curtains over the windows, and wandered about restlessly. Presently from the press she took her favourite garment—a quaint yellow cloak with a hood. She threw the cloak about herself, drew the hood over her hair, and sat down, witch-like, on the floor before the big mirror. And then with the reflection presented was linked the thought

of the swaying flowers in the paddock, the troops of fairies. She ran out of the room, down the stairs, and into the midst of them.

Her naïve eyes, her mouth at once innocent and sensitive, her wide brow, her habit of gazing into a far distance, her short dark hair, which she wore unbound, gave to her appearance a quality essentially childlike. She had the soul of a child. To her there were indeed troops of fairies. But she had also the Rennie characteristic of never relinquishing a problem. Though she played amongst the flowers, she still remembered Simon's trouble.

The cloak intrigued her. Not only did its sunny hue suit her complexion, but its style savoured of romance. Beyond the paddock stretched woodlands, bounded by a wall so low that travellers going up and down the high-road could look into the cool green depths. In obedience to Simon's orders, Marjorie had not approached the boundary.



"'Lost your tongue?' he queried. She said nothing. Under the folds of her cloak she clutched her earnings."

But there might be riding on that road a knight-errant who would succour a distressed damsel.

She played with the idea, not believing, yet not deeming it impossible. Eventually she stole through the wood to the low mossy wall.

It happened that in an adjacent market town an annual fair was that day held. There were, therefore, many passers-by. The girl who, all unconscious of loneliness, had yet been very lonely, was glad to watch the simple pageant. The country people, walking, driving in slow vehicles, jogging along on sturdy cobs, saw the strange, bright, cloaked figure seated on the wall under the greenery.

"Look, mother, there's a witch!" said an urchin, and instantly she answered—

"Cross my palm with silver and I'll tell your fortune."

"'Tis one of they show-folk," said the mother, and offered sixpence.

Somewhat astonished at this ready acceptance of herself as a witch, Marjorie was too much of a child not to continue the pretty game. She told the fortunes of the group so adroitly and with such success that others joined in the demand. They were a tolerant, good-humoured folk. She was not known to them; her face, shadowed by the hood of her cloak, was hardly discernible; from crown to heel the yellow cloak enwrapped her as she sat.

Her fertile imagination, her quick wit, adroitly served her. The children, perhaps, thought her really a witch; their elders considered her a good business woman for stationing herself where she could take toll of heavy pockets without competition.

She tied her silver coins in a corner of her cloak, and, when noon approached, she took advantage of a lull in the traffic to speed homewards, entering discreetly, carrying her disguise and her treasure.

The adventure had brought a radiant bloom to her face. Mrs. Martin noted the glow, and asked what she had been doing. She answered readily she had been a witch, and the woman smiled indulgently, remarking to herself that Mr. Simon did well to be so careful of his sister, who was so lovely and so innocent.

Her sense of affluence was such a satisfaction that she could not resist increasing her secret hoard. She thought she had solved the problem that had so perplexed her. She assured herself that she would soon be independent of Simon, who could then marry Miss Dalrymple and live happy ever after.

The afternoon was spent as the morning had been. Occasionally pedestrians other than country folk stopped to be amused. One and all they imagined her of the show people, though there was some discussion. A girl in tweeds, with a man and a fishing-rod, remarked later that the witch had a fascinating voice, and her companion vowed she had hands that surely belonged to no gipsy woman. One man said afterwards that the girl had a cloak "like that poor little woman Sybil Rennie used to affect. *You* remember."

The afternoon waned and the stream of wayfarers ceased. Those who were attending the fair had now arrived there, and the hour of return was not yet. Marjorie was about to withdraw, when from the Squire's wood opposite came a man who leapt the wall, and, seeing her, stood in the roadway, swinging his stick.

He was a rough-looking fellow. His cap was pulled down over his eyes, and he wore a bright-hued handkerchief about his swarthy neck; the pockets of his coat bulged. He glanced up and down the road, then crossed to where she sat.

"What's your lay?" he demanded.

Intuitively she disliked him. She returned no answer. He could not see her face distinctly.

"Lost your tongue?" he queried.

She said nothing. Under the folds of her cloak she clutched her earnings, which were tied in a corner. The man suddenly reached out, caught her by the shoulder and shook her so that she almost lost her balance, and, to save herself, she threw out her hands. The heavy little bundle swung from her hold, and instantly he descried it.

With a low guttural sound he snatched at it, but her passion blazed. She forgot her fear. Her small strong hands fought with him for the spoil. Vindictively he cursed her.

"Let be, or I'll throttle you!" he growled, bringing his face close to hers. She looked about her from side to side, still struggling with him. He whipped out a knife, cut her treasure out of her grasp, sprang over the wall, and disappeared under the trees.

She screamed. The quiet woods echoed and re-echoed with the cry. She would have pursued him, but immediately on the other side of the opposite wall appeared two people, a man and a woman. Marjorie knew the Squire. She screamed again intelligibly,

and the Squire also leapt the wall and came quickly to her, his companion following.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he asked sharply.

She pushed back her hood.

"Good Heavens, it's Marjorie Rennie!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter? What's happened?"

"There's a man in there. He came out of your wood and stole my money, and now he has gone. Look! Look at what he did!" She held up the despoiled cloak.

"A man? Why, that's been cut with a knife! Stole your money, eh? How much?"

"A lot—oh, such a lot! All silver money." She began to cry, covering her face with her hands.

"What on earth is it all about?" demanded the Squire, turning to his companion. "You ask her. It's Rennie's young sister. He guards her like the apple of his eye. Money, eh? Tied up in her cloak?"

"Yes, it was," the girl sobbed. "I earned it."

"Earned it! Good Heavens! You earned it!"

She looked up, ceasing to weep. Her tears became her.

"I will tell your fortune, sir, if you cross my palm with silver," she said.

Later Simon Rennie returned to Green Gables. Marjorie, very pensive and quiet, had had her supper and was sitting in the embrasure listening to the tapping of the lime tree on the window. Suddenly the library door was thrown open, and Simon, somewhat indistinct in the dusk, called her name. The tone of his voice startled her. She went to him at once demurely.

A lighted lamp illumined the room. Simon seemed strangely tall, and there was anger in his face. He did not speak immediately, but stood by the table, looking at her with his angry eyes.

"Perhaps you will be so good as to tell me what you have been doing with yourself to-day," he said at last.

She was silent, at a loss how to explain her adventures. Until this moment she had seen nothing wrong in what she had done; now, suddenly, everything was wrong.

"Are you angry with me?" she asked. "Don't be angry. You see, I wanted some money."

Simon breathed very quickly. His fingers clenched and unclenched.

"I think you have taken leave of your senses," he said. "Look here! I have a letter from Hughes, telling me you spent the afternoon sitting by the roadside telling fortunes to anyone who would give you money. The disgrace of it! It is intolerable!"

He threw the letter on the table.

"He says you were assaulted and robbed. They've even caught the fellow, and want me to prosecute. Prosecute! Rather would I see the length of the country between myself and him!"

She was silent, unable to deal with the situation.

"Well, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing."

She twisted her small hands in her thin white dress. Her childlike demeanour struck him.

"You behave like a stupid child," he said. "Stupid! Your conduct is monstrous! I cannot conceive why you did such a thing. To wear your mother's cloak, to sit by the roadside and beg for money!"

She sighed deeply.

"Go to bed!" he stormed. "I don't wish to see you till you understand the disgrace of it!"

She turned obediently. Suddenly she swung round, ran to him, and would have taken his hand.

"Simon, Simon, you don't understand! Let me tell you—oh, do let me tell you!"

His mood of furious anger changed to a cruel calmness.

"I understand perfectly," he said. "No matter what your reason may be, you have committed an outrage. Our mother's memory, our good name—both disgraced! I will not believe you are responsible for your actions."

She drew back trembling. His present attitude was worse than his anger. She could not speak to him for the pain in her throat.

"I have striven to realise my duty to you," he continued pitilessly. "It seems that I have failed in not providing a duenna. It never occurred to me that you were not to be trusted, that you could be so utterly lost to all sense of decency. To sit by the roadside and beg money of the passers-by! The very idea is intolerable!"

Suddenly he strode to the door and opened it.

"Go to bed!" he ordered.

She went slowly from his presence, ascended to her room. She undressed, still white-lipped, but tearless. The aching pain in her throat was a torment. Simon's

words echoed and re-echoed endlessly in her mind.

She brushed her short hair. Then, as though she could not keep away from the evidence of her guilt, she stole to her mother's room and went gently in.

The yellow cloak was in the press where she had hidden it. She sat down on the floor and spread it before her. The jagged edges hurt her physically, as though they represented a wound.

She began to weep over it. She kissed it over and over. And then—was it the spirit of the beloved dead mother that came and drew the tear-wet cloth from her distraught hands ?

" Marjorie, I have come as quickly as I could," said a voice. " I only heard at dinner that Mr. Hughes had written to Simon. Was he very angry ? "

" He was terribly, terribly angry," she sobbed, heedless of the identity of her visitor, caring only that here was one to whom she might voice her wrongs. " He said I am a disgrace. . . . He said I am out of my senses . . . ."

" When men are angry they speak like that. Tell me everything. I will go presently and explain to him."

The child poured out her story, eagerly, rapidly, in a quivering voice. " Mrs. Martin said Simon wanted to marry Miss Dalrymple, but he could not because he had to take care of me. We are so very poor. She said Simon stayed away from the garden-party because Miss Dalrymple would be there."

There was a pause.

" I know Simon wants to marry Miss Dalrymple. I know it. I saw . . . But I did not beg for money, as he said. The people enjoyed it. The little boy thought of it first. He said ' There's a witch.' I did not think of being a witch till he spoke."

In the library Simon Rennie was reading and re-reading the Squire's letter. The Squire had written in a humorous strain which the young man did not appreciate. Indeed, every time he perused it his anger increased. The door was opened very suddenly to its widest extent. He looked up, then started to his feet. Miss Dalrymple, having made her second effective entry that evening, closed the door and crossed the room to him.

" I think you must be the very last man in this world to be entrusted with the care of a child," she said deliberately.

She was nearly as tall as he, and startlingly fair. Her entry had astonished him. He summoned his forces.

" I have reason to be aware of it," he answered bitterly.

" You have had a great scene with that poor child. She is terrified. Pray, why have I not met her before ? "

" Her behaviour——"

She made a gesture.

" Is this heavy-brother business so necessary ? When I consider what girls of her age generally are, I think it wonderful that she should be so unspoiled, so naïve. Tell me, why have you kept her in such seclusion ? Why have I not met her before ? "

She spoke for all the world as if she were angry. Believing that she despised him, his anger died.

" I do not know why you have not met her. She has not been home long, and I have not been very festive." He finished abruptly.

" So ! " Her voice softened, deepened. " She has had no companionship but her dreams."

He met her gaze.

" Dreams," she said idly, as though she were thinking aloud. " Little, silken, elusive, delicate, winged things—so easy for you to kill, for your blundering feet to trample on."

He caught his breath.

" Don't ! Don't ! " He advanced, trembling hands outstretched. " I trample on my own dreams, too."

Her hands met his, clasped them, held them. He pressed them to his lips, and then he was pouring out the story of his love, his poverty, his pride. She came nearer, her blue eyes like flames. His lips were on her lips, and his torrent of words was stilled.

Again the door opened. Marjorie, in her white night-gown, appeared on the threshold.

" Simon, I came to tell you I am sorry—I am sorry ! "

Miss Dalrymple extricated herself from Simon's hold.

" Ah, come in, child," she said. " Give her half-a-crown, Simon, and let her tell you your fortune."



"'The Islands are a lottery,' he was telling her. 'Draw the right number, and you're made. That's why we stick to them.'"

HIT OR MISS

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY C. M. PADDAY

"TO-MORROW, daylight, then?"

"That's right."

"Good night."

"Good night, Frank."

When he had gone, Amery settled back on the cabin locker to smoke a disreputable pipe in slow, methodical puffs, and stare fixedly at the swinging lamp. He knew exactly where his partner was going. He would catch the two-thirty ferry across the harbour and climb the red earth path to the bungalow with the garden overlooking the sea. There he would be as charming as Frank Baird knew how to be. He would balance a tea-cup on his knee with the ease of an expert, and talk trivialities until the old man fell asleep. Then he and Dorothy would go into the garden. There was an arbour at the bottom, right on the edge of the cliff, covered with passion-fruit vine . . .

Here Amery checked the flow of his thoughts as though turning off a tap. He possessed the unusual strength of mind to do this, and always did it at the same juncture. He considered it unwise to go further, because once, when he had allowed himself that privilege, he found himself entertaining disturbing and altogether foreign sentiments toward Frank. And that would never do. Better break with your partner than hate him. Besides, the thing was childish . . . Amery uncrossed his legs, stood up, and shook himself like a mastiff, then reached down a roll of charts from the rack in the cabin roof, and fell to studying them with knit brows.

So correct had he been in his estimate of Baird's movements, that at that moment his partner was balancing a blue-and-white china cup on his knee, the while he discussed party politics with the old man. An hour later he was sitting in the vine-clad arbour at the bottom of the garden, pretending to watch the ferry-boats that scarred the fair

face of the harbour, but in reality unconscious of anything save the woman at his side.

"The Islands are a lottery," he was telling her. "Draw the right number, and you're made. That's why we stick to them."

"You and Tom have had a good many draws, haven't you?" said the girl, smiling.

"I suppose we have," he confessed, "but you never know your luck, and this time. . ." He stopped abruptly, plucked a passion-fruit leaf with a quick, nervous movement, and commenced tearing it to ribbons.

"Yes, this time?" prompted the girl.

"It's hit or miss." He looked into her unwavering eyes.

"Hit or miss—this time."

"And Tom told you not to let me know anything about it," suggested the girl, in her low, even voice.

Baird looked down at the shredded leaf in his hand, then flicked it from him and settled back on the cushions.

"Tom doesn't 'tell' me to do things—like that," he said deliberately. "He's nominal skipper aboard, because someone's got to be, and he's the elder man, but we're partners. It was an understanding."

"I see," said the girl softly. "I like the way you and Tom understand one another."

"We ought to, after being shipmates seven years."

"And I envy you Tom."

Baird looked away over the harbour, the tan of his face slowly deepening.

"He's a good fellow," he said shortly.

A silence fell between them, one of those silences that a woman knows intuitively how long to sustain. It was inevitably Baird who broke it.

"We've bought the *Spindrift*," he announced.

"The *Spindrift*?"

"Yes, Tatham's auxiliary yacht." He went on hurriedly, as though pent-up thoughts had suddenly found vent. "She's only fifty feet over all, but a picture. The auxiliary motor drives her at six. I've been learning 'em up. I'm engineer." He laughed boyishly. "I tell you, we're all in with the *Spindrift*."

"But isn't she very small for—for the Islands?"

"In tonnage, perhaps, but you should see her construction. She's a cruiser, fit to go anywhere, and two men can handle her; that's what we want."

"You two—alone?"

"As far as the Islands, yes. We'll pick up a Kanaka crew there—if we want one." Baird grinned mysteriously. "We're on to something this time."

Again there fell a silence, and again it was Baird who broke it.

"Copra and shell are dead," he went on. "Companies with steamers are handling that sort of stuff these days. We're after something better than copra and shell, and if we get it—if we get it——" His long, nervous fingers were interlocked and writhing between his knees. "But there's always an 'if,' isn't there?" he ended abruptly.

"You mustn't look at it like that," said the girl. "Of course you'll get it, though I don't know what the 'it' is—no," she added quickly, as he turned to her with parted lips, "and I don't want to know—if Tom would rather not."

"It was only that we thought——"

"It was an understanding," the girl reminded him. "Good luck to you both."

"Thanks," he said, staring over the harbour. "And whether it's hit or miss, you'll be the first to hear; but you know that."

"Yes, I know that," she answered.

A grim smile twisted Baird's mouth, but his eyes never left the harbour.

"Sometimes," he said, "I wonder just what will happen if we do hit."

Across the water a clock boomed the hour of six. It seemed to break Baird's train of thought. He stirred uneasily, then got up.

"I must be going," he said; "we sail at daylight."

And he went, leaving the girl, a dainty white figure against the all-pervading green of the garden, looking after him with thoughtful eyes.

Even then he only missed his partner by a few minutes. Once they had met on that red earth path leading up to the bungalow, and it had constituted a situation not to be repeated. Thereafter, through all the years that they had known Dorothy Fielding, it was tacitly agreed between them that Baird should go in the afternoon and Amery in the evening. Their understanding of one another was extraordinarily clear.

"I envy you Tom," the girl had said, and she spoke truth. There was that in Amery that inspired confidence, a quiet solidity that was infinitely restful, especially to a woman. She went on with her needlework when he came, and Amery sat smoking

placidly, saying little, but absorbing her proximity with a thoroughness that converted her every word and movement into a memory.

And at daylight the next morning she stood on the edge of the cliff in a fluttering kimono, her hands at her breast, while a trim white yacht surged down the harbour fairway under power. As the vessel drew level with the bungalow, the helmsman raised an arm, and presently, above the sliding hatch aft, a head appeared and another arm was raised and lowered in farewell.

So the partners put to sea, and the woman they loved watched them from the cliff until their ship dissolved into the rose-tinted haze of dawn.

North-north-east they sailed, the south-east trade serving them well. The *Spindrift* proved a witch. Sometimes, with tiller lashed for hours on end, she surged through indigo waters, while the partners ate or slept or discussed their undertaking over charts outspread on the cabin table. The fittings of the *Spindrift* had been reduced to bare necessities. Gone were Tatham's atrocious water-colours in gilt frames that had bespattered the white walls of the saloon, flimsy door hangings, tapestry cushion covers, and all the senseless fripperies of an overdressed ship. And the partners were no less business-like. They spoke only when they had something to say. Small-talk had long since passed out of their curriculum. They knew instinctively what there was to be done, and did it with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of fuss. Moreover, they had shed their shore-going clothes as effectively as their party manners. Baird wore a flimsy straw hat, an undervest and a towel; Amery a battered solar topee, a sleeveless shirt, and a pair of well-beloved dungarees.

One thing only remained unchanged below deck on the *Spindrift*, and that was the gorgeous mahogany chronometer case in the saloon. It contained, untouched and rated to the last minute of departure, three of the best instruments money could buy, and in another compartment, no less sacred, Amery's disreputable-looking pillar sextant.

After something like two weeks of almost monotonously perfect weather, and at a dawn of pearl-grey cloud floating in amethyst, the *Spindrift* raised an atoll. It was the first of the Tau group, comprising over three hundred of these fairy rings of the sea. For the rest of the day the yacht sailed along walls of surf-pounded coral enclosing lagoons of unbelievable colour.

At night she anchored to the reef, for no one ventures amongst the Taus when it is impossible to tell blue water from green, and Baird went ashore, returning in a few hours with three sturdy "boys." These had no idea where they were going, nor when, if ever, they would return; neither did they care, provided there was a ship to sail. Coast Kanakas are like that, and they worked the *Spindrift* to such purpose that in two days their home was well over the rim of the horizon and the yacht lay hove-to on an oily swell.

Amery lowered his binoculars.

"Piper's a bit out," he said, "but that's to be expected."

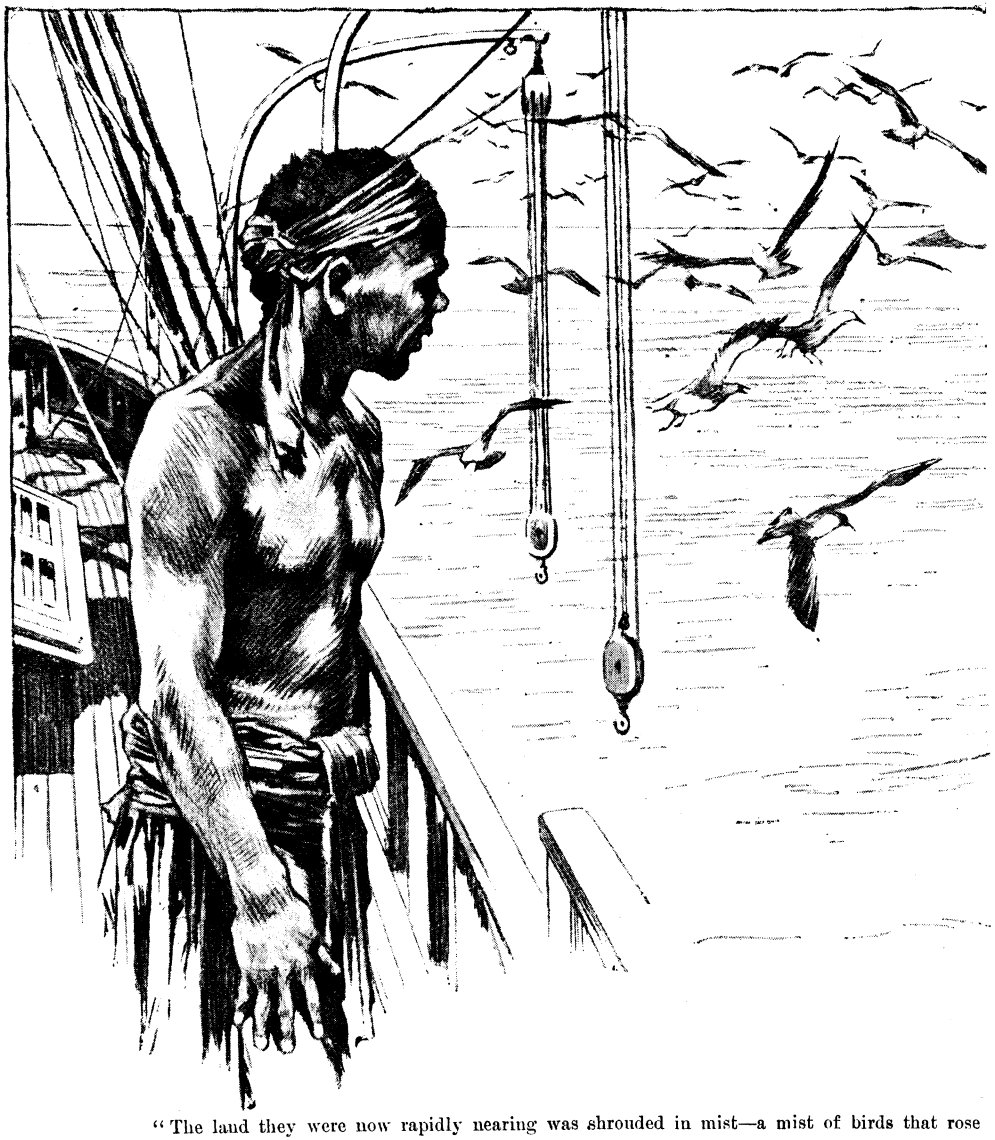
Baird nodded.

"Better charm her up and have a look round."

Exactly what the Tau "boys" thought of the *Spindrift*'s subsequent antics it is hard to say. A machine was set in motion that had the amazing effect of propelling them through a stark calm at six knots for three days and in ever-widening circles, while the two white men ceaselessly scoured the horizon. What they expected to find, the great spirits alone knew, for it is well known that beyond Tau there is nothing.

It was equally evident that these two were capable of miracles, for at the end of a weary week two bo'sun birds, their long, thread-like tails streaming in their wake, appeared out of nowhere, after the fashion of sea-birds, and circled above the ship's truck, swooping now and then to get a closer view of the intruders. Others joined them, and presently, amid the babel of bird voices and the rush of wings, one of the white men, who had stood like a figure-head in the bows for the past hour, flung up an arm, and where he pointed a dull grey mass rose out of the sea. That is what the Tau "boys" claim to this day. It was interesting, too, to see the effect of this miracle upon its workers. The hands of one trembled visibly as he took the wheel and spun it over. The other showed no sign. By such trivialities do the unsophisticated tell the fibre of a man.

The land they were now rapidly nearing was shrouded in mist—a mist of birds that rose and hovered and shrieked. It was necessary to shout above the din. Wings fanned the face. The whale-boat was lowered and rowed shoreward under a drumming roof of them.



"The land they were now rapidly nearing was shrouded in mist—a mist of birds that rose

Amery and Baird landed without difficulty, and trudged inland through an ankle-deep, greyish dust that rose about them in choking clouds. Neither spoke. All day, without food or drink, they scoured the island in a wilting heat that seemed to affect them not at all. From north to south, east to west, they plodded and paced, always through the same grey dust littered with the skeletons and feathers of birds, and always to the drumming accompaniment of wings.

Towards night they stumbled down to the beach like a pair of weary dustmen, rowed out to the ship, and sat staring at one another across the cabin table.

It was hard to realise even now. The island they had found, the same that old Piper, the consumptive schooner skipper, swore he had seen, but was too sick at the time to alter his course and inspect, was a straggler, a lost, uncharted child of the Taus. It was of upheaved coral formation, which means that it had been an atoll until some mighty convulsion of the earth's past had thrust it clear of the sea. What had once been its lagoon was now a bone-dry basin a mile by a mile and a half, filled to the brim with pure guano. And it was theirs.

"Well, that's that, and here's to it!" said Baird, with glass upraised and an excited catch in his voice.



and hovered and shrieked. It was necessary to shout above the din. Wings fanned the face."

Amery filled his pipe with customary deliberation.

" Piper was three degrees out," he complained, " three degrees . . . ."

Such was their respective fashion of hailing good fortune.

An hour later the auxiliary was propelling the *Spindrift* through an oily calm, when a shudder ran through the ship, followed by the faint clang of metal and the crazy racing of the engine.

Amery sprang aft, and saw under a bare fathom of crystal-clear water a forest of coral fronds, and above them, protruding from the ship's quarter, the shattered remains of a propeller. They had barely grazed a submerged reef, another atoll in the making, but it was enough ; the *Spindrift* lay helpless as a log. Thus the Islands kiss on one cheek and strike the other within an hour.

The days that followed were in the nature of an accumulative nightmare. For the first three the Tau " boys " squatted in the bows, whistling for a wind that never came, and the partners occupied their thoughts with a garden overlooking the sea and other things worth having. On the fourth grey clouds assembled, merged into a nondescript murk, and settled down on the face of the waters like a giant hand intent on crushing the breath out of life.

"Looks like a stayer," commented Baird.

Amery nodded. He knew the signs of this pestiferous region on the Line. He could recall the name of a sailing-ship that had had her insurance paid before getting clear of the Taus. But what troubled him was the knowledge that on the morrow they must begin to ration the water.

* * * * *

There came a night, as dead as the eternity of days and nights that had preceded it, when Amery woke from a fevered sleep and lay staring at the beams above his bunk. His throat ached abominably, his tongue felt like dry flannel in the mouth, but there was nothing new in this. The ship's company was long since down to half a pint of water a day, and all that remained was a bare three gallons in a beaker carefully guarded in the saloon. What struck Amery as unusual was a sound, so faint as to be hardly discernible, but to his fever-sharpened ears maddeningly unmistakable—the gentle trickle of water. For an instant he ascribed it to his own delirium, the next he had moved his head sufficiently to catch a glimpse of the saloon. It was dark, but on the floor it seemed there was something in faint relief, something altogether too close to the water beaker. It moved.

"Swab!" croaked Amery, and fired.

Yet, by the time he had sprung from his bunk and switched on the light, there was nothing to be seen but the three startled faces of the Tau "boys," each on his mat in the fo'castle, and Baird raised on an elbow, peevishly demanding to know the cause of the racket.

"Either I'm a rotten bad shot, or I've got 'em," said Amery, flicking the perspiration from his forehead.

"Bit of both, I expect," grumbled Baird. "Finished the quinine?"

He was standing it better than his partner, but then he was a younger man, and fever had never taken a proper hold on him. Amery climbed back to his bunk, alternately shivering under a pyramid of blankets and anathematising himself for a back number.

The next day it rained, but a mile away. It has a knack of doing that on the Line. You may stand on a ship's deck and see the grey pall of the sky burst into a deluge on either hand, hear the maddening patter and plash of fresh water meeting salt, and never a drop come your way. Again the Islands, in whimsical mood.

And then, as though by magic, there came an evening when it was possible to breathe without effort, when one could lean over the rail, at first imagining, then convincing oneself of the blessed motion of air by the faint bellying of the mainsail. The *Spindrift* was under weigh.

Baird took over, spinning the wheel with a flourish.

"West-sou'-west," Amery directed between clenched teeth, and staggered to his bunk.

The Kanakas capered in the bows at the sight of the Taus a few days later, swam ashore before the anchor had touched bottom, and returned with a canoe-load of green coco-nuts.

Baird leant over his partner's bunk.

"It's all over, old man," he said, shaking him gently. "Tom, d'you hear?"

Amery heard, and opened his eyes on a brimming shell of coco-nut milk, that he drained at a draught. But he was weak, pitiably weak.

"You'd better get on with it," he whispered. "I'm no good for a bit."

Baird looked down on him, a strange expression in his eyes.

"What d'you take me for?" he demanded.

Amery struggled on to an elbow.

"You know what I've taken you for these seven years," he growled, "and if you're anything like it, you'll do what I say. Heave right ahead—register, and lease, and all the rest of it. Piper'll give you a hand. Amery, Baird, and Piper Incorporated, eh?" He chuckled raucously. "A thing like this doesn't want to be left a day longer than need be. I'll follow on at the first chance."

Baird turned away and stared through a porthole. He could do that—the best possible for his partner. All his wit and energy must be centred on just that from now on—the best possible for Amery, and perhaps, in time . . .

"What the devil's got you?" boomed Amery.

Baird started and turned.

"Nothing," he said. "I'll go."

* * * * *

He had not meant to go to the garden overlooking the sea, not until Amery was back. But the first evening, alone with his thoughts after a day of interviewing sleek gentlemen at roll-top desks with entirely satisfactory results, broke down his resolve. There could be no harm, and he must talk to someone or go mad, and wouldn't she think it strange? . . . Of course she would, and she did, and said so in the arbour at

the bottom of the garden. If she had not been the first to hear, as he had promised, she would never have forgiven him.

Baird told her all—or nearly all, and at the end sat staring before him with troubled eyes until the girl's hand touched his arm.

"What's the matter, Frank?" she questioned gently.

He started and stared at her.

"Nothing," he said. "Why?"

"You can't tell me that," she insisted, still very gently.

Baird moved uneasily.

"I was thinking of Tom," he confessed.

The girl leant back on the cushions.

"Oh, you two!" she laughed, and was startled at the look in his eyes as he turned on her.

"I tell you this," he jerked out; "nothing that I can do, nothing, you understand, will ever repay Tom for what I've—for what he's done for me. I . . ."

And that was probably why half an hour later Dorothy Fielding was in his arms.

"It was never anyone else?" he demanded roughly.

"Never," she told him.

"And nothing can make any difference—nothing?"

She looked into his eyes, and he had his answer.

Two months after they were married Amery came back, a trifle thinner, but otherwise his old self.

"And what do you think of an old crock who can't hold his end up?" he asked Dorothy, on the afternoon of his first call.

"Now you're fishing," she bantered. "Frank says——"

"But you surely don't take any notice of what Frank says—now?" laughed Amery.

They managed it very well, that first meeting, until Baird left them to afternoon tea, while he interviewed further gentlemen at roll-top desks, then things seemed to drag. They had never dragged before, and Amery was at a loss until the girl took up her needlework as of old.

"Tom," she said presently, without looking up, "will you help us? But I needn't have asked that," she added, the colour suffusing her averted face. "Just listen, and don't say anything till the end, like you always do. Frank has something to tell you—something that he has told me. If he didn't tell you, I believe it would kill him; he is like that." Her head bent lower over her work, her voice was a low monotone. "It is a thing that he—that we both think shameful. Nothing will make it right, but something—surely something that a man can say to a man will make it easier for him." She lifted her head for the first time. "Promise me you'll say it."

"I promise," said Amery. "Go on."

She put down her work and went over to the window, standing with her back to the room, her eyes fastened on the little square of suburban garden outside.

"You shot Frank," she said quietly.

* * * * *

For hours after that ghastly interview Amery paced his hotel bedroom. Curiously enough, he felt no resentment, only an overwhelming pity for his partner. Heavens, what a confession for a man to have to make! And he (Amery) must listen to it and say something at the end—"to make it easier for him." He laughed in sheer hopelessness at the task none but a woman would set. Nothing would make it right, she had admitted that . . . Amery paused in his stride. Two wrongs did not make a right, he told himself, yet they have been mighty comforting on occasion. The thought seized on him, held him. He was actually chuckling at his own cunning when the bell-boy announced Baird.

It was plain that he laboured under intense excitement.

"I shan't keep you long," he said, declining the chair Amery indicated. "I've only come to let you know that I'm the swab you once called me. Look at this." He rolled up a trouser leg, exposing a clean flesh wound in the calf. "You did that, and you know when. I took water. There's no excuse, nothing. I wanted to get through—you know why—and I got through. For nearly two weeks I took water. What have you got to say to that?"

Amery slowly levered himself out of his chair.

"Nothing much," he said, "except that I can't see the necessity of all this song and dance about it."

"Why don't you say what you think?" Baird exploded. "I'll take anything—glad to."

Amery looked at him, a whimsical smile playing under his moustache.

"You fellows with superfine consciences make me sick," he said. "You're a pest. You took water. Well, for that matter, so did I."



AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

BOBBY: Are you going in the drawing-room?
FAMOUS PIANIST: Yes, I am going to play the piano.
BOBBY: I'd get sent to bed if I went in there with my hair looking like that.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A BARGAIN.
By Gilbert Davis.

"BILL," said my sister Dulcie, "we are going to do some Christmas shopping."

"Are you?" I replied mildly, but she was not to be put off.

"I said '*We* are going shopping'!" She fixed me with her gaze, and I knew it was hopeless.

"*Kamerad!*" I said. "Where are we going?"

She reeled off the names of most of the big London shops, while I stood and gasped.

"Are you sure you haven't forgotten anywhere?" I managed to say when she had finished, but my attempt at sarcasm was quite lost upon her.

"We will start at ten and lunch out——"

"Nuff said!" I interrupted. "I'll go and sell some of my oil shares to pay for the lunch."

My word! We did have a morning of it. I was really pleased when lunch-time came, and sank down thankfully opposite Dulcie in the restaurant of her choice.

"You look tired," she remarked.

"I am tired," I replied. "I seem to have spent the morning in holding open swing-doors for other people to pass through."

"First time I've ever noticed you were so polite," commented my sister.

"But I've finished," I continued. "Manners or no manners, I shall hold open no more doors!"

"I bet you will!"

"No, I am adamant. No more doors!" I folded my arms and tried to look determined. With anyone else but my sister, I should have succeeded, but she merely laughed.

"Well, I'll bet you five bob you do!"

"Such slang!" I said, raising my hands in mock horror. "Still, I'll take you on."

After lunch Fate led us in the direction of a large store in Oxford Street.

"In you go!" I said, holding the door for her. "You don't count in the bet."

I was just going to let go of the door when the vision appeared. I'm not going to describe her. She was too wonderful. Even Dulcie admitted afterwards that she was very pretty.

I stood gazing at her in wonderment, with my hand still on the door, and she passed through, rewarding me with a wonderful smile.



MONEY'S WORTH.

TRAVELLER: This is a very fatiguing journey.
HIELANDER: Ay, an' so it ocht ta be. It's costing twa poun's twa shillin's an' saxpence!



BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.

HEAD OF THE FIRM: There isn't time for you to clean the typewriter this morning, Miss Smythe.
MISS SMYTHE: But it will only take about fifteen minutes.
HEAD OF THE FIRM: Yes, I know. But we can't spare the two hours it will take you to manicure your nails afterwards.

Then I came back to my senses, and let the door swing-to right in the face of an old gentleman.

Dulcie extended her hand.

"Five bob, please!"

I handed her two half-crowns.

"It was worth it," I remarked, gazing after the retreating form of my enchantress.

A PREHISTORIC PEEP.

(The recent report of the presence of a Brontosaurus in Central Africa has aroused a new interest in prehistoric animals.)

I'm glad I wasn't living in those prehistoric days,
When the animals were very large and fine,
And on the population most contentedly would graze—
Well, it wasn't safe to be out after nine.

The bulky Triceratops wore a fascinating smile,
And the Brontosauri barged about in crowds,
The prickly Plesiorsaurus measured nearly half a mile,
And Pterodactyls hovered in the clouds.

When the prehistoric housewife was preparing Irish stew,
She'd often rush for cover with a yell,
For the forty-foot Glyoptus and the ring-tailed Kamazoo
Wore frequently attracted by the smell.

They found it most annoying, when they went in for a dip,
For very quickly out they had to pop,
Lest the dread Ichthyosaurus should get them in its grip,
Or the Kylowallup catch them on the hop.

The merry Stone Age hunter seldom got a good night's rest;
He'd sometimes wake up feeling quite a wreck,
With a Mastodon performing the fandango on his chest,
And twenty yards of Python round his neck.

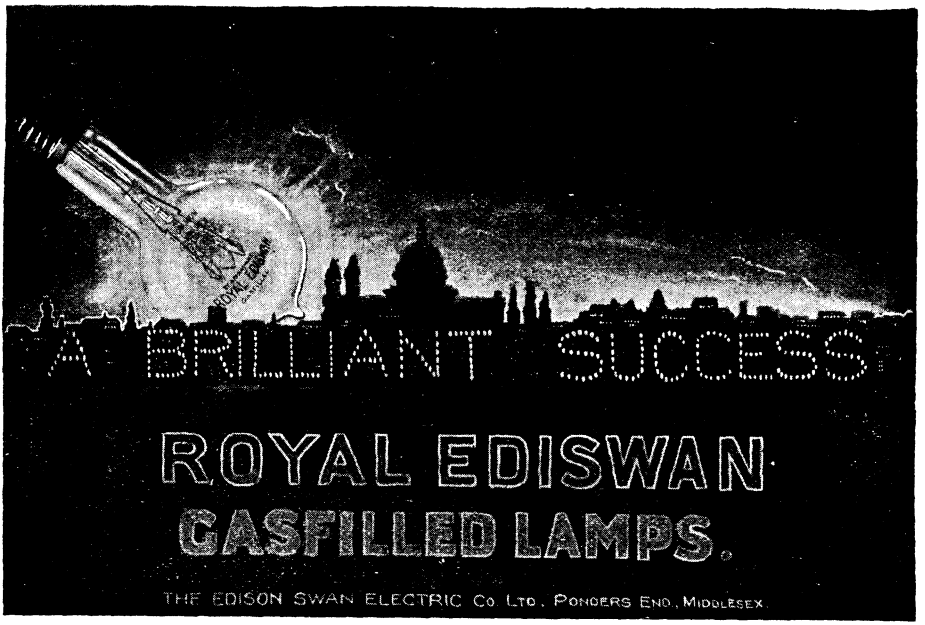
R. H. Roberts.

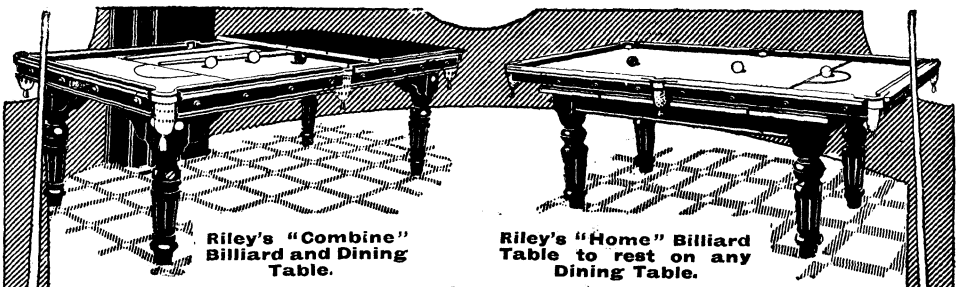


A PESSIMIST.

BUTCHER'S BOY: Merry Christmas, Sarah! Wotcher got yer face wrapped up for?
SARAH: Merry Christmas? I got the toothache! Last Christmas I 'ad the mumps, so *next* year, I suppose I shall be with a vegetarian family!

"YES," said the big, stout man, "there are some funny professions about. Take mine, for instance. I'm a suit orderer, I am. What's that? Well, it's like this. When one of my clients wants to buy a new suit of clothes, I undertake, for a small commission, to go and get measured for it. I'm an out-size, but tailors have to take the fat with the lean, and don't charge me any extra. Consequently, when I hand over the suit to my client, his wife cuts it down to fit him, and gets enough stuff over to make an extra pair of trousers or a suit for little Willie. I don't want the price of clothes to go down; it would ruin my connection."





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Riley's "Home" Billiard Table to rest on any Dining Table.

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There is no more delightful recreation during the winter evenings than a game of billiards in your own home on a Riley "Home" Billiard Table. Every table in sent on Seven Days' Free Trial, carriage paid to any address within one mile of nearest railway station. If you are not satisfied after trial, Riley's will collect at their expense. *The buying terms are so easy that every home can have its own table—and you play as you pay.*

Riley's "Combine" Billiard and Dining Table is a handsome piece of furniture as a dining table and a high-class billiard table. Made in solid mahogany, with low frost-proof rubber cushions, best quality slate bed, and all accessories included.

Riley's "Home" Billiard Table fixes securely and with perfect balance on any dining table. The most popular size is 6 ft. 4 ins., cash price **£13 10s.**, or 18 monthly payments of **18s.** Made in solid mahogany or oak, with best slate bed, low frost-proof cushions, and all accessories included.

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CHRISTMAS CARDS.

I get no joys from Christmas cards like those they take away,
When they come in lieu of letters due, raise hopes but to betray.
I sent ten newsy sheets to Ned, who tactfully returns
A picture of four festive Scots—lines praising booze by Burns.

My brother in Nigeria, whose wife has Spanish 'flu,
Sends, instead of news, "a comic," "Christmas Dinner at the Zoo."
A fair but faulty correspondent mails me from Vancouver
Rubber-renovated antiques, "Christmas Rations," chaffing Hoover.

With Sam I had arranged a yearly interchange of thought
On politics. Conclusively I showed him that we ought
To leave Mesopotamia. His answer made me squirm—
Two robins playing tug-of-war with an elastic worm!

When Laura left, 'twas understood that we might correspond.
My letter was a masterpiece, so witty, wise and fond.
Her writing on an envelope! What can it hold? Alas!
A snow scene showing village waits, frosted with isinglass.

Then send no card at Christmas-time to vex my holiday.
Dear girl, resume your rusting pen—*respondez, s'il vous plait.*
Sunshine in winter pleases most, though brief the daylight be:
Snowed up by cards, my heart would melt at e'en a line from thee!

B. A. Clarke.

MILDRED, aged nine, anounced to her father that her friend Grace was to give a Christmas party, to which Mildred had every reason to believe she would be invited. "And I've got to take her a present," she added.

"Present!" exclaimed the father. "If you can't be invited to parties without taking presents, you'd better stay at home."

The next day, regretting his hasty words to his unhappy-looking daughter, he said:

"Mildred, I bought a couple of boxes of chocolates for you to take to Grace's party."

"It's too late, now, daddy," said Mildred gloomily. "I scratched her face to-day so that she shouldn't invite me."



FROM BAD TO WORSE.

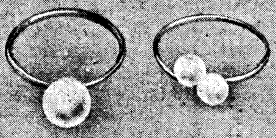
HOUSEHOLDER: Here, take this and clear off at once!
SYMPATHETIC WAIT: Ah, someone is ill at this happy season? I am sorry.
HOUSEHOLDER: Yes, I am. I've got housemaid's knee, and if you don't clear off, it'll turn to hydrophobia.

"WHAT are you staring at me for?" asked the enormously fat man in a railway carriage.

"Please, sir," replied the small boy, "there's nowhere else to look."



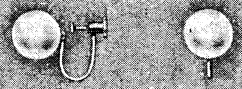
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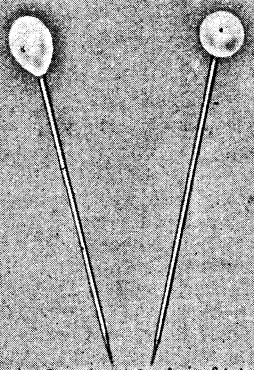
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GHOSTS.

By Frederick Watson.

"He actually sees ghosts?" I asked our hostess, and was instantly aware that I had said the wrong thing. It was, without a doubt, one of those tea-parties where one might so innocently go on causing distress with the awful serenity of a man who thanks Providence for the gift of tact.

"Mr. Princely," she replied with constraint, "is the greatest authority on—but you would not understand the term."

"No, no," I said modestly.

"It is so difficult," smiled our hostess—"I mean, one forgets that people outside think merely in terms of—what shall I say? Mr. Princely is not a mere spiritualist."

"No, no," I said quickly, and shook my head.

"Mr. Princely has written several books. He is the busiest man I know. He is, of course, conducting spiritual investigations all night, and he dictates all day. His latest on 'The Elemental in Upper Cheyne Walk' is certain to arouse a furore amongst the initiated."

"How very horrible!" I said, with quite a decent shudder.

"No," she corrected. "Oh, no. Nothing is horrible to the open mind. It is jelly. Yes. And it sits on the hearthrug. But please do not speak of it. One can only go so far. Even Mr. Princely. He can only go to the confines——"

"Is that the name of the house?" I asked intelligently.

She did not hear. I rejoice to say none of them heard. For the door had opened and, after a merely momentary pause, Mr. Princely came dropping in.

He was a quiet, but not a shy man, and he settled to his tea in the face of that devoted group. He was talking as he came in, and I am perfectly certain, even now as I write, Mr. Princely, wherever he is, is talking still. He spoke in a curiously fatigued and pensive tone of every kind of distinction of ghost, and he claimed one's grudging tribute when he said (while munching with evident relish a buttered crumpet): "Were-wolves—yes, I was nearly strangled last Friday by one in a maisonnette in Notting Hill."

He was like that. Nothing amateur about him. From the moment he entered that place the air was seething with spooks. But they were not the old-fashioned properties I knew about. They were new advanced Things, not Ghosts at all. A stout lady under an immense hat, with feathers that nodded at her every breath, spoke of a house that was haunted by a melancholy smell. There was nothing else, she said. Only a smell, but so sad that visitors wept. Mr. Princely appeared to brood over that, and then said quite solemnly: "I once materialised a smell. It was a flamingo. Perhaps you remember. They said it had escaped from a travelling menagerie!"

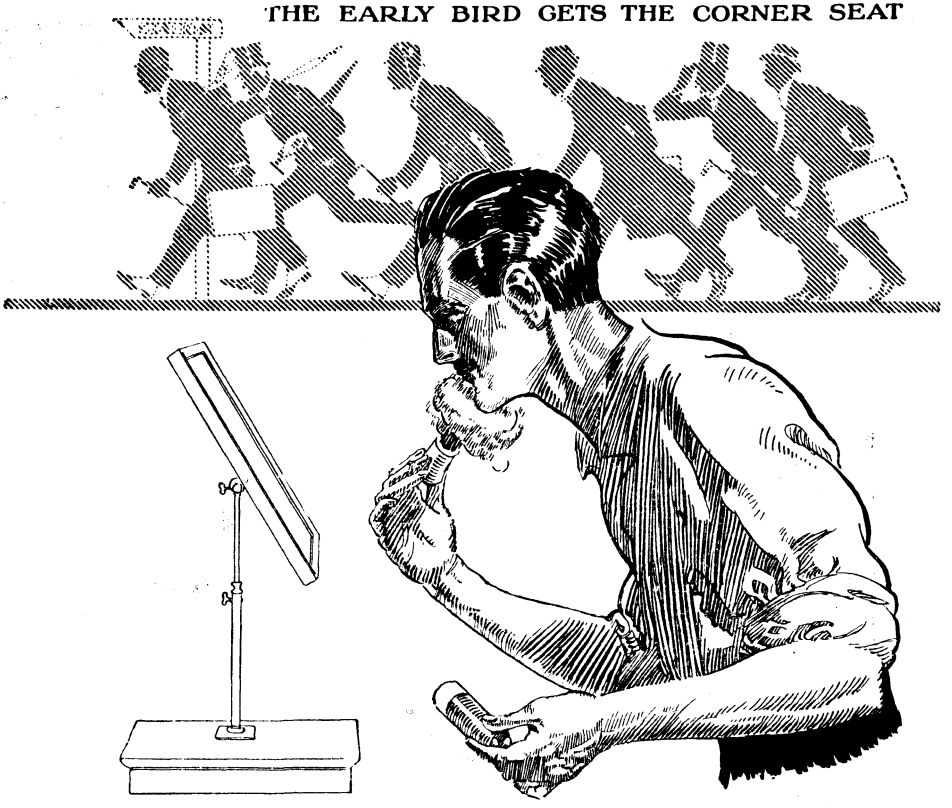
At that we all laughed low, understanding laughs, and the Colonel present (there is never a séance of any kind whatever without a colonel) whipped away the crumbs from a dilapidated moustache and remarked rather childishly: "In that book by Cerement——"



THE LURE OF THE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR.

Small Girl (addressing policeman): Will ye please tell Tommy to pass along there, please? He won't come home.

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But something—telepathy, I suppose, which would, of course, be on edge in that place—struck him into a humiliating silence. He had said the wrong thing. He knew at once that he was getting very old. We all knew it. Our hostess accompanied him to the door, and he slipped away. Mind you, Mr. Princely was gracious beyond words, considering how idiotic it was of the Colonel, for even I appreciated that Cerement was the only other man who really knew *everything* about the supernatural.

But there's no future in stuff like that. It's all too vague and disembodied. People don't care about it. The ghost tradition never had anything to do with another world; its interests have always been so very firmly linked up with this one. Long, long ago it came to roost with the best people. Rid human nature of snobbery, and you have banished for ever its retinue of attendant spooks. Deprive elderly ladies of the sense of social prestige around the tea-cups, and you will hear no more messages from some other world.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

CIRCUS PROPRIETOR: Where's "The Six-Year-Old Child Wonder"? We're waitin' for 'er.
CLOWN: Oh, she's gone down to the station. 'Er daughter's been married to-day, and she wanted to see 'er off on 'er 'oneymoon.

For ghosts, you may have noticed, frequent castles much more readily than hovels. They prefer armour to homespun. You have at dinner heard someone say with very audible gusto: "Last year, when I was spending the twelfth with my dear old friends the MacJacobs,



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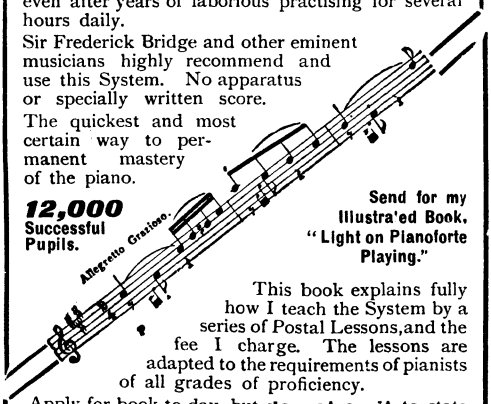
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From Brain to Keyboard

Macdonald Smith's System of Pianoforte Playing.

at their place in Strathsporran——" Never "Last Christmas I was with my Uncle Bill (he's interested in drains, you know) in his old pigsty in Glamorgan——"

No one cares about impoverished ghosts. Poor people don't haunt. They'd be cold-shouldered by the other tenants. So they clear off. Who ever heard of a ghost in Bolton, or Wigan, or St. Helens, or Peebles, or Paisley? And they don't even last very long. Like the old soldier, they do not die—they fade away. Although the world has gone on quite a time, and people disposed of each other just the same in the good old days, there are no surviving specimens of ghosts B.C., or ghosts of Rome, Greece, or Early Britain. There aren't even Goths, or Anglo-Saxons, or Danes. A ghost is doomed, one imagines, when his descendants are too poor, or too busy, or too indifferent to repeat his awful past. It is so different with the Conquest and the Crusades—they are worth while. If you can say, as you walk over a modernised drawbridge, that your name was really de Brown, a lie like that is enough to galvanise a dozen ghosts. It promotes what those dreamy, far-away people who see things call "the atmosphere."

There are Cavalier ghosts, but Roundheads are very scarce. There are Jacobite ghosts who sigh and pass invisible goblets over the water, but no Hanoverians. The industrial revolution which might, Heaven knows, have peopled the country with ghosts was barren, but who has not heard of the House in Berkeley Square?

Monks are popular because houses associated with the Old Faith are obviously older than houses merely Anglican. The day for the Particular Baptists may be dawning—one never can tell. But there are no modern ghosts like those in the good old days. And I'll allow it is a solace, when the profiteer is aching for any sort of ghost at all, to refer with proper languor to the old family coach that thunders over the tennis court ("Where the old drive used to be, Stuart times—yes, very curious"), but who will ever remark with the same sense of assurance, "And suddenly we heard the toot-toot of the old 1920 landaulette," or "And there on his motor-scooter flashed past Great-Uncle Borrage, leaving a trail—a trail——"

"Yes, yes, of blood?" "No—of petrol."



A PROBLEM OF THE DAY.

MRS. GOLDFLEECE TO MRS. KOTTON-MILLES: 'Strawdinary mild weather for the time of year, isn't it? One hardly knows how to dress, does one?

A MAN returned home one evening to find his wife somewhat perturbed, and, when he inquired the reason for her uneasiness, she told him that she had lost their marriage certificate, and she had always heard that it was unlucky to do that.

"Never mind," said the husband reassuringly; "any of those receipted millinery bills will do for a substitute as a proof."

These Three Charming Presentation Pictures FREE to Users of

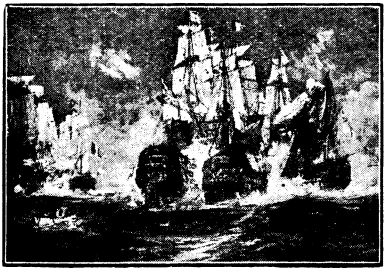
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In this picture, Mr. Charles Dixon, the well-known seascape artist, has chosen for his subject the scene at the fatal moment when Lord Nelson was mortally wounded by a shot fired by a French marine from the mizzentop of the "Redoubtable." The "Victory" and the "Redoubtable" will be seen locked together. To the right is the famous "Temeraire," whilst to the left is the French ship "Bucentaure" and the Spanish ship "Trinidad." The picture is strikingly vivid in imagination, rich in colour, and full of the atmosphere of battle.



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COMING DOWN.

When daily you are seized with blues
  Which mar the morning cup,
To read, besides the murder news,
  That prices still go up,
Some crumbs of comfort you may find
  To chase the gloomy frown,
If you will only call to mind
  The things which still come down.

On Nature's book, if you will think,
  And only use your eyes,
You'll find each day the sun will sink
  Some nights the moon won't rise.
And when without your trusty gamp
  You go to pay some calls,
The rain which makes you very damp
  Does not go up—it falls.

Perchance you have a ceiling cracked,
  Which causes you despair,
But which your landlord, when attacked,
  Refuses to repair.
Then on it as you fix your gaze,
  And tremble for your crown,
You know it won't be many days
  Before the thing comes down.

If on the stairs you chance to tread
  Upon a pail and mop,
It's not a rise you have to dread—
  There's bound to be a drop!
Rejoice, too, when your wifey says
  Her mother up in Town,
"To spend with us the next few days,
  My dear, is coming down!"

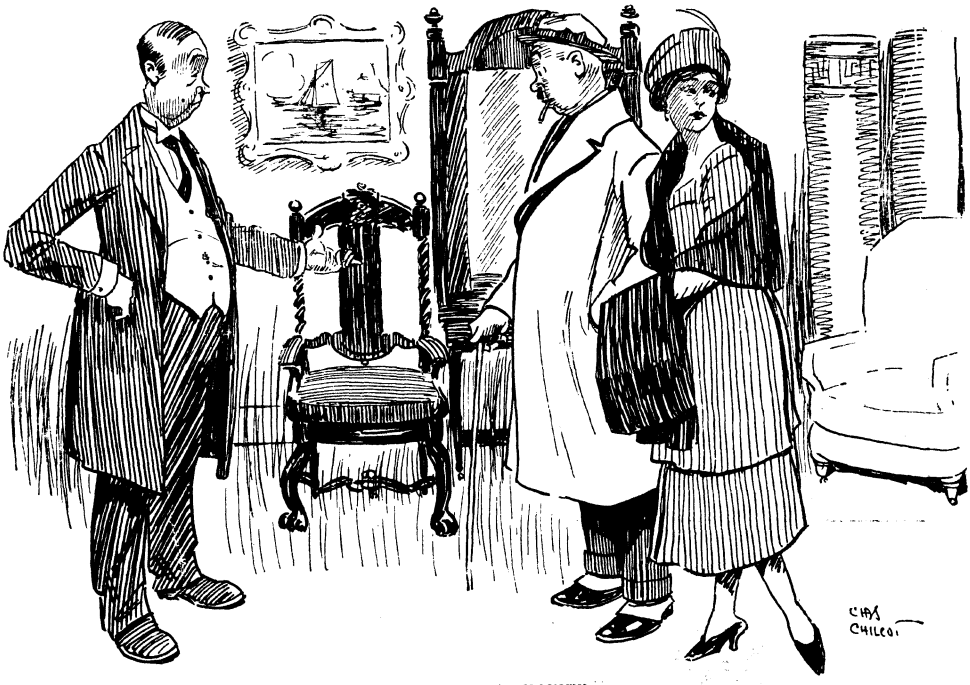
R. H. Roberts.

SOME grown-up people find it hard to understand a healthy child's need for constant physical activity.

In the midst of the sermon at church one Sunday morning, a lad of eight leaned over to his mother and whispered:

"Mother, do you think they would mind if I went through my stretching exercises? I am awfully tired of sitting still."

THE mother of a nine-year-old boy was much perturbed to learn that he had been engaged in a pitched battle with the bad boy down the street. Therefore she asked for some explanation



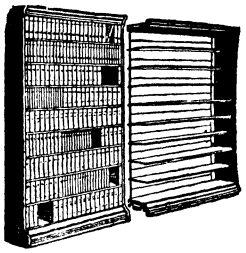
UP-TO-DATE ANTIQUITY.

SALESMAN: It's genuine antique, sir.
CUSTOMER: But you are asking a fearful price for it.
SALESMAN: Well, look how carpenters' wages and cost of materials have gone up, sir!

"When that horrid boy threw stones at you," she demanded, "why didn't you come to me and tell me instead of throwing back at him?"

"Tell you, mother?" said the boy, with unfeigned astonishment. "Why, what good would that have done? You couldn't hit a barn door!"

"SHE is absolutely unbearable," said a famous wit with marked emphasis of a well-known woman of fashion; but, as if he had gone too far, and wanted, in sheer charity, to take something off what he had said, he added, "It is her *only* defect."



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WOULD you like absolutely free of charge a box of the world's daintiest and most wonderful Cigarettes, a box containing an assortment of all brands of ERAM-KhayyamAmber cigarettes, tipped with real petals of Roses, mauve Silk, real Gold and Cork; Cigarettes from which issues the most delicious and fragrant of Oriental odours, Cigarettes which are only to be found in the Divans and Harems of the native princes of India. There is nothing in Europe to match them.

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Anyone not wishing to order 100 ERAM Cigarettes can obtain a Gift box of assorted ERAM-Khayyam Cigarettes on sending remittance for 5/-.

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and call or address your order and remittance to

L. & J. FABIAN,

ERAM Cigarette Manufs. (Dept. A.C.),
74, New Bond St., London, W.1.

Your Money returned if not satisfied.

APPLYING THE CLOSURE.

By C. W. Cundy.

WIDGEON is the human monologue. He starts leaking conversation first thing in the morning, and keeps up a steady drip-drip of assorted vowel sounds and mixed consonants till the bedroom door mercifully closes on him at night. Then I expect he talks in his sleep.

Yesterday he bundled into a railway carriage containing George, Archibald, and myself. Short of forcibly ejecting him through the window, there was no evading him, so we bowed our heads silently and hoped for laryngitis, relaxed throat, or a railway collision. But we had no luck. He got off the mark directly the guard's whistle went, was fairly in his stride before the train had left the station, and at the first signal-box had settled himself down to beat all records in a long-distance non-stop conversation event. He gave us his considered views on the weather of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, handed round faded blooms of anecdotage culled from *The Druidical Times* and *The Early Roman Advertiser*, and reviewed the political situation with copious footnotes. At length George threw himself bodily through a pause in a sentence.

"Did you ever hear the story of the nigger in France, Widgeon?" he asked.

"No," replied Widgeon. "But I once read an awfully good yarn about an Irishman who wanted to buy a pig. One day——"

"This nigger belonged to the Service of Supply in the American Army," interrupted George resolutely, "and was posted to a depôt several miles behind the lines. The first night the sergeant posted him as a guard over a coal dump——"

"Speaking of the dump scandal——" commenced Widgeon.

"Knowing the nigger was somewhat loquacious," went on George ruthlessly, "the sergeant warned him that he wasn't to speak a word to anyone while he was on duty. 'Ef you do,' he said, 'the enemy might hear you an' get their guns on the dump. In that case you'll probably finish your sentry duty in a place where coal ain't an urgent necessity!' 'Sakes alive!' said the nigger. 'You kin bet yo' life, serg, the noise this chile's gwine to make'll sound like Harry Ford challenging Jim Dempsey to a bare-knuckle to a finish.'"

"By the by," interjected Widgeon, "mention of Ford reminds me that I saw a car——"

"The night was dark and dreary," continued



CHRONIC.

"Do you really think the whole of Scotland will go dry, Mr. McDougall?"
"Madam, Scotland's aye dry!"

Miss Gladys Cooper Explains Some Beauty Secrets.

The Popular London Star Favours Simple Methods.

I HAVE been asked to give a few simple recipes that I know, either through personal use or by observation, to be valuable to the toilet, and which are within the reach of the average woman. In these days of £100 facial treatments and elaborate and expensive beautifying processes my suggestions may read like lessons in economy, but they are not especially so intended. They are merely practical suggestions, in which the keynote is "effectiveness." All the materials or ingredients which I mention are either already at hand in the home or may be readily procured from the chemist. Fortunately I do not suffer from the ailments or troubles enumerated below, but some people who are not so fortunate have told me their experiences, and with your permission I will set forth some remedies which they have found to be efficacious.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

My acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is a very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ½ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

Complexion Renewals.

Complexion experts advise me that a normal, healthy complexion is constantly renewing itself by dropping off in tiny flakes of worn-out tissue, thus revealing the fresh young skin underneath. They say that when this process is checked by age, exposure or some of many causes, the complexion becomes dull and ugly. The rational treatment recommended is to help the skin perform its natural functions of "shedding" worn-out tissue. For this purpose, I am informed, there is nothing so good as pure mercolized wax, used for a few nights, just as you would use a face cream. It is claimed that it possesses a special affinity for the effete scarf-skin, which it quickly removes by absorbing it. The face, I am assured, will soon look much younger and prettier under this treatment.



MISS GLADYS COOPER.
Photo] [Wrather & Bay.

Removing Superfluous Hair.

I have been told of some most remarkable experiments in removing superfluous hair, roots and all, with what is said to be a perfectly harmless substance known as phelactine. It is claimed for this preparation that it is not a depilatory and therefore does not burn or injure the skin. With a candle flame it is first melted to a syrup-like consistency, and while still warm is smeared on the skin over the superfluous hair. Although it is removed almost immediately, the effect is supposed to paralyse and loosen the hair roots, for when it is removed the hair should come right off with it and the roots themselves. I am told that in many cases the growth never reappears, and that even if it does so it returns only after a very long time and in so much weaker form that it is easy to cope with by means of a repeated application of phelactine. I understand that the method is becoming so well known that many chemists are now supplying phelactine in specially prepared packages containing full instructions for home use.

Is Powder Necessary?

A great many women object to using powder, for various reasons. The following formula is a good one: Dissolve an ounce of cleminite in four tablespoonfuls of water, or witch-hazel, and use it as a face lotion, smoothing the skin with the fingers until it is dry. This method is perfectly harmless. I am told that a really beautiful, natural, velvety bloom results and remains for many hours quite unaffected by the most trying conditions out of doors or in the ballroom or theatre, and that it gives a much more natural appearance to some skins than does ordinary powder.

Grey Hair.

I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of two ounces of tammalite mixed with three ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally.

The Curling Iron.

Don't use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night. When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair, and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant, and neither sticky nor greasy.

How to Shampoo.

Most women, I am informed, do not know how to use stallax properly when shampooing with it. Unless the hair is naturally very oily, a stallax shampoo may sometimes leave it rather dry. But I am told if you will apply olive oil freely to your hair and scalp just before shampooing with stallax, the result is most delightful. The hair will be left clean, soft, bright and wavy, the olive oil having properly balanced the action of this wonderful hair cleanser.

Care of the Hands.

An excellent method of putting the hands in fine condition, and keeping them so, is to rub them with bicrolium jelly just before retiring at night. This quickly takes away roughness, redness, tan, etc., and makes them soft, white and smooth. After this has been done, an occasional application will keep them in proper form.

Gladys Cooper

NOTE.—This interesting article on beauty culture in general was written by Miss Gladys Cooper at the request of the manufacturers of Pilenta Soap—the best complexion soap in the world. On sale at all chemists.

George in his deepest diapason, "and the nigger's relief was unduly delayed. After a few hours the loneliness got on his nerves, and he started talking to himself for company. 'Whyforever dis coon left a safe job at fower dollahs a day and his eats to loaf about an open-air coal-cellar all night, I doan for goodness know!' he said. At that moment a Boche 'plane happened to be returning from a bombing expedition. It had one undelivered bomb, and it unloaded it on the dump. The coal flew in all directions, and one piece knocked the nigger out of time. As they took him to hospital—luckily the coal hit him on the head, and therefore did not seriously injure him—the nigger was heard to remark: 'I kin see I never oughter left home. I talk too much!'"

As George finished, we all looked triumphantly at Widgeon, expecting to see him crumple up like the man who was found at a Bolshevik meeting with a safety razor in his pocket. But he merely remarked blandly: "The part taken by the American Army in the War——" and continued stringing the dreariest bromides ever heard outside a meeting of the Mudville Mutual Improvement Society.

We carried George out at our destination a broken wreck.



THE ONLY WAY.

PASSENGER (in a hurry): Can't you get on a bit quicker than this, conductor?
CONDUCTOR: I could, but I canna leave the car.

BEAUTY AND BRAINS.

("A search for combined beauty and brains" has been instituted by a weekly paper.)

Clorinda is fair and has cheeks like the rose,
And a most fascinating slight tilt to her nose;
She can fox-trot all night without any distress,
And chatter for hours on novels and dress;
But of serious subjects she don't know the fringe,
And never reads essays produced by Dean Inge.

And Gladys, who's often admired, is a dream,
Has a dainty complexion of peaches and cream,
And eyes like the violets, and tresses which curl;
But whenever she goes to a concert, that girl
As to names of composers is quite in the dark,
And cannot distinguish 'twixt Chopin and Bach.

Dora carries herself with an elegant grace,
Has a dear little dimple each side of her face,
And a mouth like a rosebud, but never can chat
About economics or subjects like that,
And is quite at a loss her ideas to arrange
On the science of atoms or rates of exchange.

But now a search-party has gone out to seek
For a beauty who babbles in Sanskrit and Greek,
Who has read all the poets in Russian and Dutch,
And can talk by the yard about ethics and such.
I'm not very hopeful, but trust, for their pains,
They will capture a beauty who bristles with brains.

Facing Third Cover.]

ON seeing a turkey for the first time, a small visitor to a country village stood and looked at it in wonder. When her mother asked, "Well, what do you think of Mr. Turkey?" Ethel replied:

"I think he is a very ugly thing—such a long neck, with his tonsils on the outside, and all swelled up like that."

A SMALL boy of three rather surprised his family by the alacrity with which he accompanied his father to the barber's to have his first hair-cut. When he was seated in the tonsorial chair, a look of satisfaction overspread his small countenance.

"Do you know," he smiled up at the surprised barber, "there are two kinds of baa-baas? One is a sheep, and then there's you."

THE WINDSOR

JAN 7 1921



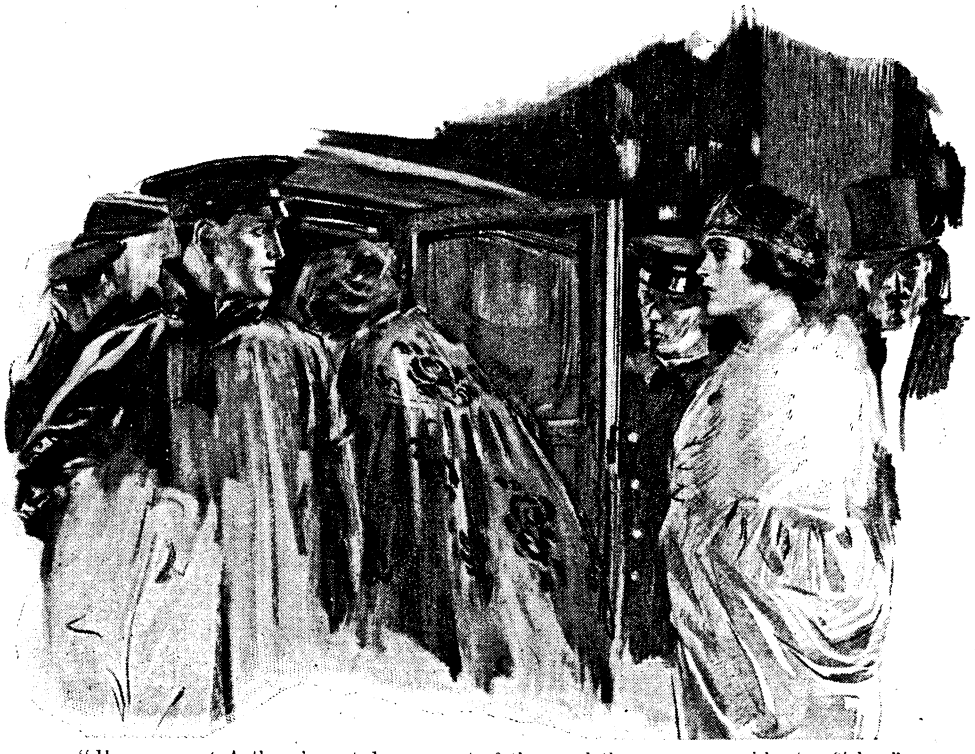
ONE SELLING NET


"Here's to my
Jolly Good Health,
Fry's
and to the Source of it"
Fry's
PURE BREAKFAST
Cocoa
ESTABLISHED in the Reign of GEORGE II



H.R.H. PRINCESS MARY INSPECTING THE GIRL GUIDES.

Photograph by Photopress. *See article "The Girl Guides," on page 149.*



"Her eyes met Anthony's, rested a moment of time, and then swept on without a flicker."

IN THE FIRST PLACE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne" and "The Courts of Idleness."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

MAJOR ANTHONY LYVEDEN, D.S.O., was waiting.

For the second time in three minutes he glanced anxiously at his wrist and then thrust his hand impatiently into a pocket. When you have worn a wrist-watch constantly for nearly six years, Time alone can accustom you to its absence. And at the present moment Major Lyveden's watch was being fitted with a new strap. The pawnbroker to whom he had sold it that morning for twenty-two shillings was no fool.

The ex-officer walked slowly on, glancing into the windows of shops. He wanted to know the time badly. Amid the shifting press of foot-passengers a little white dog stuck to his heels resolutely. The sudden sight of a clock-maker's on the opposite side of the thoroughfare proved magnetic. Pausing on the kerb to pick up the Sealyham, Lyveden crossed the street without more ado . . .

Twenty-one minutes past three.

Slowly he put down the terrier and turned Eastward. It was clear that he was expecting something or somebody.

It was a hot June day, and out of the welter

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of din and rumble the cool plash of falling water came to his straining ears refreshingly. At once he thought of the dog and, thankful for the distraction, stepped beneath the portico of a provision store and indicated the marble basin with a gesture of invitation.

"Have a drink, old chap," he said kindly. "Look. Nice, cool water for Patch." And, with that, he stooped and dabbled his fingers in the pool.

Thus encouraged, the little white dog advanced and lapped gratefully . . .

"Derby Result! Derby Result!"

The hoarse cry rang out above the metallic roar of the traffic.

Lyveden caught his breath sharply and then stepped out of the shelter of the portico on to the crowded pavement. He was able to buy a paper almost immediately.

Eagerly he turned it about, to read the blurred words . . .

For a moment he stood staring, oblivious of all the world. Then he folded the sheet carefully, whistled to Patch, and strode off Westward with the step of a man who has a certain objective. At any rate, the suspense was over.

A later edition of an evening paper showed Major Anthony Lyveden that the horse which was carrying all that he had in the world had lost his race by a head.

* * * * *

By rights Anthony should have been born about the seventh of March. A hunting accident to his father, however, ushered him into the middle of the coldest January ever remembered, and that with such scant ceremony that his lady mother only survived her husband by six and a half hours. When debts, funeral and testamentary expenses had been deducted from his father's bank balance, the sum of twenty-three pounds nine shillings was all that was left, and this, with the threat of royalties from one or two books, represented the baby's fortune. Jonathan Roach, bachelor, had risen to the occasion and taken his sister's child.

Beyond remembering that he did handsomely by his nephew, bred him as became his family, sent him to Harrow and Oxford, and procured him a commission in the Royal Regiment of Artillery before most of the boy's compeers had posted their applications to the War Office, with the living Jonathan Roach we are no further concerned.

The old gentleman's will shall speak for itself and the man who made it.

THIS IS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of me Jonathan Roach, of 75, Princes Gardens, in the County of London, Esquire. I give, devise, and bequeath all my real and personal estate of every description unto my nephew Anthony Lyveden absolutely, provided that and so soon as my said nephew shall receive the honour of Knighthood or some higher dignity . . .

Anthony received the news while the guns, which he was temporarily commanding, were hammering at the gates of Gaza. He read the letter carefully twice. Then he stuffed it into a cross-pocket and straightway burst into song. That the air he selected was a music-hall ditty was typical of the man.

Curiously enough, it was the same number that he was whistling under his breath as he strode into Hyde Park this June afternoon.

Patch, who had never been out of London, thought the world of the Parks. After the barren pavements, for him the great greenswards made up a Land of Promise more than fulfilled. The magic carpet of the grass, stuffed with a million scents, was his Elysium. A bookworm made free of the Bodleian could not have been more exultant. The many trees, too, were more accessible, and there were other dogs to frolic with, and traffic, apparently, was not allowed.

When he had walked well into the Park, Lyveden made for a solitary chair and sat himself down in the sun. For a while he remained wrapped in meditation, abstractedly watching the terrier stray to and fro, nosing the adjacent turf with the assiduity of a fond connoisseur.

For nine long months the ex-officer had sought employment, indoor or outdoor, congenial or uncongenial. The quest was vain. Once he had broached the matter haltingly to an influential acquaintance. The latter's reception of his distress had been so startlingly obnoxious that he would have died rather than repeat the venture. Then Smith of Dale's, Old Bond Street—Smith, who had cut his hair since he was a boy, and was his fast friend—had told him of Blue Moon.

There is more racing chatter to be heard at the great hairdressers' than almost anywhere else outside a racecourse. Some of it is worth hearing, most of it is valueless. The difficulty, as elsewhere, is to know the grain from the chaff.

According to Smith, Blue Moon was being kept extremely quiet. Certainly the horse was little mentioned. Lyveden had never

heard his name. And thirty-three to one was a long price . . .

Lyveden pricked up his ears, and Smith became frightened. He was genuinely attached to his young customer, and knew that he was in low water. He begged him not to be rash . . .

After some careful calculations, which he made upon a sheet of club notepaper, Lyveden came to the conclusion that thirty-three birds in the bush were better than one in the hand. Reckoning a bird at one hundred pounds and Lyveden's available assets at the same number of guineas, who is to say he was wrong ?

At twenty minutes to five on the eve of the Derby, Lyveden handed a protesting Smith one hundred and one pounds, to be invested in Blue Moon—" to win only." The odd note was to bring Smith his reward.

A big bookmaker whom Smith was shaving as usual, at a quarter past six, accepted the commission, pocketed the notes with a sigh, and gave the master-barber forty to one.

Four thousand pounds—in the bush.

That his thirty-three nebulous birds had become forty before they took flight, Anthony never knew. A man whose sole assets are a Sealyham, a very few clothes, and twenty-two shillings and sixpence, does not, as a rule, go to Dale's.

" Young fellow, come here."

Patch came gaily, and Lyveden set him upon his knee.

" Listen," he said. " Once upon a time there was a fool who came back from the War. It was extremely foolish, but then, you see, Patch, he was a fool. Well, after a while he began to feel very lonely. He'd no relations, and what friends he'd had in the old days had disappeared. So he got him a dog—this fool, a little white scrap of a dog with a black patch." The terrier recognised his name and made a dab at the firm chin. " Steady ! Well, yes—you're right. It was a great move. For the little white dog was really a fairy prince in disguise—such a pretty disguise—and straightway led the fool into Paradise. Indeed, they were so happy together, the fool and the dog, that, though no work came along, nothing mattered. You see, it was a fool's paradise. That was natural. The result was that one day the fool lifted up his eyes, and there was a great big finger-post, pointing the way they were going. And it said WAY OUT. The dog couldn't read, so it didn't worry him ; but the fool could, and fear smote upon his heart. In fact, he got desperate, poor fool. Of course, if he'd had any sense, he'd 've walked slower than ever or even tried to turn round. Instead of that, he ran. Think of it, Patch. *Ran.*" The emotion of his speech was infectious, and the terrier began to pant. " Was there ever quite such a fool ? And before they knew where they were, the two were without the gates. And there "—the voice became strained, and Lyveden hesitated—" there were . . . two paths . . . going different ways. And by each path was a notice-board. And one said NO DOGS ALLOWED. And the other said NO FOOLS ALLOWED. And there were only the two paths, Patch . . . going different ways . . ."

The approach of a peripatetic tax-collector brought the allegory to an end.

Anthony paid for his occupation of the chair in silence, and the collector plodded off at a tangent in the direction of his next quarry. This appearing to be an old lady, he presently altered his course. With a caution bred of experience, he would approach her from behind.

A convenient clock struck four, and Lyveden rose to his feet . . .

Two hours later he descended the area steps of a mansion in Lancaster Gate.

The change in his appearance was quite remarkable. The grey suit, soft hat, golf collar and brown shoes, which he had worn in the afternoon, had been put off. In their stead Lyveden was wearing a bowler hat, black boots, a single collar, which stood up uncomfortably all the way round his neck, and a dark blue suit. The latter was clean and had been carefully brushed, but it was manifestly old. Besides, it was obvious that the man who made them had meant the trousers to be worn turned up. Their owner's present disregard of such intention argued his humble respectability.

Arrived at the foot of the steps, Anthony thrust a relieving finger between his throat and the collar for the last time, raised his eyes to heaven, and rang the bell.

After a moment or two the door was opened by a fair-haired girl in a print dress. Her sleeves were rolled up, and her hands and arms dripping.

" Afternoon, miss," said Lyveden. He was determined to do the thing properly. " Your lady still wanting a footman ? "

The girl stared at him. Then—

" I dunno," she said. " Better come in, an' I'll see."

Anthony thanked her and entered. She shut the door and flung down the passage



"'I hope your dog isn't hurt,' he said quietly. 'I'm very sorry.'"

and out of sight. A second later a momentary burst of chatter suggested that she had opened the door of the servants' hall.

For a minute or two nothing happened, and Lyveden stood in the passage with his hat in his hand, wondering whether his engagement was to rest with the butler. Then a door opened and closed, and a girl dressed as a parlourmaid appeared upon the scene. She was walking slowly, and seemed to be endeavouring to extricate something from the depths of her mouth.



"The girl did not deign to answer, but . . . summoned her terrier, and strolled down the little greensward."

"Come in answer to the ad.?" she queried.

"That's right," said Lyveden.

"Oh." She leaned against the wall and regarded a wet forefinger. "Got a bone in me gum," she added abstractedly

Anthony wondered whether he was expected to offer assistance, but, deciding to risk a breach of etiquette, assumed a look of anxiety instead.

"How rotten!" he murmured.

The girl looked at him curiously. Then—

"'Addock, too," she said "An' that's easy, reelly, as fish goes. But there, I ain't got much use for any fish, 'cept salmon Shall I say you're 'ere?"

"Yes, please, miss. I've no appointment."

"You're the firs', any way," was the comforting reply.

She left him standing.

The inspection to which during her absence Lyveden was subjected was only

less trying than the open secrecy with which it was conducted. Heads were thrust into the passage to be withdrawn amid a paroxysm of giggling. Somebody was pushed into full view to retire precipitately amid an explosion of mirth. Preceded by stifled expressions of encouragement, a pert-looking lady's maid strolled leisurely past the newcomer, opened the back door, closed it, and returned as haughtily as she had gone. She was applauded ridiculously. . . .

Anthony swore under his breath.

At last the parlourmaid reappeared, finger in mouth.

"Somethin' crool, this bone is," she vouchsafed. "Come on."

Anthony followed her gratefully upstairs and presently into a small withdrawing room upon the first floor.

From an expensively hideous couch Mrs. Slumper regarded the fruit of her advertisement.

She was a large vulgar-looking woman of about fifty summers. Whosesoever the hair of her head, it was most elaborately dressed and contained five combs. Anthony counted them. She was enclosed in a dress which was at once highly fashionable and painfully unbecoming, and the pearls which rose and fell upon her tremendous bosom were almost too good to be true. From beneath the short skirt a pair of ponderous legs terminated in all the anguish of patent-leather shoes.

Anthony bowed.

"'Oo 'ave you bin with?" said Mrs. Slumper.

"If you take me, madam, this will be my first place."

Mrs. Slumper choked with emotion.

"Firs' place!" she cried. "Want ter try yer 'and on me?" She looked round savagely. "Where's me lorenets?" she added furiously.

Much as a victim-to-be might hand his despatcher the knife, Anthony plucked the eye-glasses from beneath a cushion and put them into her hand.

His action took the wind out of her sails. Anthony saw this, and hastened to press his advantage.

"I know it's unusual, madam, but I'm quite willing to leave at the end of a week without wages, if you're not satisfied."

Mrs. Slumper grunted with astonishment.

"Wot wages joo ask?"

"Seventy-two pounds a year, madam, and—er—all found. And one afternoon a week," he added boldly.

Mrs. Slumper blinked at him curiously.

"You don' look ser bad," she said grudgingly. "An' I'm sick an' tired of tryin' for a footman, or I'd see yer further. 'Owever . ." She looked up sharply. "Will yer put that in writin' abaout the week?"

"Certainly, madam." And, with that, Lyveden stepped to a bureau and wrote his undertaking upon a sheet of notepaper. He was about to affix his signature, when it occurred to him that footmen do not write at their mistresses' bureaux except privily or by invitation. He flushed furiously. There was, however, no help for it now. The thing was done. Desperately he signed his name. He handed the paper to the lady humbly enough.

Mrs. Slumper sighed.

"In course," she said, "we 'ave things very well done. The butler's aout naow, or I'd 'ave 'im up. But you'll 'ave ter wait, an' open the door, an' clean the boots, an' come aout on the car. I've got some noo livery—never bin worn yet—did ought ter fit you a treat. An'—'ow soon kin yer come?" she demanded suddenly.

"To-morrow evening, madam."

"Or-right."

Anthony bowed himself out.

If the parlourmaid had not been on the landing, he would have leaned against the wall and covered his face.

The girl glanced at the door he had just closed.

"Ain't she a little dream?"

Anthony grinned.

"Might be worse," he ventured, endeavouring to steer between the respective sandbanks of disloyalty and odium. "I've got the place," he added ingenuously.

The girl stared at him.

That Anthony did not appreciate why she had remained upon the landing was to her incredible.

"I 'eard," she said loftily.

Anthony felt crushed.

At his suggestion she let him out of the front door.

"See yer to-morrow," she cried.

"That's right, miss."

Anthony passed down the steps andwalked quickly away. Before he had covered a hundred paces, he stopped and turned up his trousers. The sartorial forfeit to respectability had served its turn.

When Mr. Hopkins, the butler, returned a little unsteadily at a quarter to ten to learn that his mistress had engaged a "proper

toff" as his footman, he was profoundly moved.

* * * * *

A visit to the West End offices of *Dogs' Country Homes, Ltd.*; which he made the next morning, satisfied Anthony that, by putting Patch in their charge, he was doing the best he could. There was a vacancy at the Hertfordshire branch, less than forty minutes from Town, and he arranged to lodge the terrier there the same afternoon. For the sum of a guinea a week the little dog would be fed and housed and exercised. A veterinary surgeon was attached to the staff, which was carefully supervised. Patch would be groomed every day and bathed weekly. Visitors were welcomed, and owners often called to see their dogs and take them out for a walk. It was quite customary.

Lyveden emerged from the office a little comforted.

He spent a busy morning.

Deliberately he went to his club. There he wrote to the secretary, resigning his membership. When he had sealed the letter, he looked about him. The comfort—the luxury of it all was very tasty, very appealing. He regretted that he had not used it more often. There was a time when he had thought the place dull. Blasphemy! In his hungry eyes the house became a temple—its members votaries, sworn to go sleepily about their offices—its rooms upholstered shrines, chapels of ease . . .

The door opened and a footman came in.

The silver dream shivered into a million flinders.

After the generous atmosphere of Pall Mall, the reek of the "old clothes" shop was more offensive than usual. The six pounds ten, however, was worth fighting for. Then some cheap hosiery had to be purchased—more collars of the bearing-rein type, some stiff shirts, made-up white ties, pinchbeck studs and cuff-links. As he emerged from the shop, Anthony found himself wondering whether he need have been so harsh with himself about the collars. After all, it was an age of Socialism. Why should a footman be choked? He was as good as Mrs. Slumper—easily. And she wasn't choked. She was squeezed, though, and pinched . . .

He lodged his baggage—suit-case and hold-all—at the cloakroom, and took Patch to lunch.

It was by no means the first time that the Sealyham's lunch had been the more expensive of the two. Often and often he had fed well to the embarrassment of his master's stomach. To-day he was to have liver—his favourite dish. Upon this Lyveden was resolved.

The pair visited five restaurants and two public-houses in quest of liver. At the eighth venture they were successful. At the sign of "The Crooked Billet" liver and bacon was the dish of the day. So much a blurred *menu* was proclaiming from its enormous brass frame. Before the two were half-way upstairs, the terrier's excitement confirmed its tale.

Of the two portions, Patch consumed the liver and Anthony the bacon. This was rather salt, but the zest with which the Sealyham ate furnished a relish which no money could buy.

Then came a ghastly train journey. Mercifully Patch could not understand. . . .

A mile and a half from the station, the Dogs' Home stood in a pleasant place under the lee of a wood. Fair meadows ringed it about, and in the bright sunshine the red-brick house and out-buildings looked cheerful and promising.

Slowly the two passed up the well-kept drive.

With his little white dog in his arms, Anthony Lyveden was shown everything. A jolly fair-haired girl—the superintendent—conducted him everywhere. The dogs—all sizes and shapes—welcomed her coming. Of Patch she made a great deal.

"You must be very proud of him," she said to Anthony.

"I am. And—we're great friends. I hope he won't fret much."

"A little at first, probably. You'll be coming to see him?"

"Once a week, always," said Lyveden. "Oftener, if I can."

Presently they returned to the office, where Anthony paid four guineas and received a receipt. Patch was entered in a big book, together with his age and description. Another column received his owner's name and address. The girl hesitated.

"We like," she said, "to have the telephone number, in case of accidents."

"I'll send it to you to-night."

The entry was blotted, and the girl rose. The formalities were at an end.

Lyveden picked up his hat.

Patch greeted the familiar signal joyously. Clearly the call was over. It had been a good visit—the best they had ever paid. No other place they had been to was full of dogs. Yet to be out and about with his

master was better still. He leapt up and down, rejoicing.

Anthony caught him from one of his bounds, held the white scrap very close and let him lick his nose. Then he bade him be a good dog and handed him to the girl. She received him tenderly.

"I'm very much obliged to you," he said. "Good day. I'll let myself out. It—it'll be better."

One more caress, and he passed out into the hall—blindly. There had been a look in the bright brown eyes that tore his heart.

For a moment Patch fought desperately. Then he heard a door opened and listened intently. A draught swept, and the door closed heavily. With a sudden wrench he was out of the girl's arms and across the shadowy hall. For a moment he stood snuffing, his nose clapped to the sill of the front door. Then he lifted up his voice and wept bitterly.

* * * * *

In the long mirror, half-way up the front staircase, Major Anthony Lyveden, D.S.O., surveyed himself stealthily.

"Not much the matter with the kit," he said grudgingly.

That was largely because there was nothing the matter with the man.

Six feet one in his socks, deep-chested and admirably proportioned, Lyveden cut a fine figure. His thick dark hair was short and carefully brushed, and his lean face was brown with the play of wind and rain and sun. Such features as his broad forehead, aquiline nose, and strong well-shaped mouth, would have distinguished any countenance. Yet the whole of it was shapely and clean-cut, and there was a quiet fearlessness about the keen grey eyes that set you thinking. As a footman he looked magnificent. But he would have killed any master stone dead. Royalty itself could not have borne such a comparison.

As we have seen, the strain of the last fortnight, culminating in Blue Moon's failure and his parting with Patch, had played the deuce with his temperament. The man had gone all to pieces. That, now that a week had gone by, he was himself again, the following letter will show. It will serve also as a record, and so, gentlemen, spare both of us.

Dear Toby,

Before you sailed you were urgent upon me that I should constantly report progress. Nine months have gone by, and I have not written once. Still, my conscience is clear. Hitherto I have had no progress to report.

Now, however, I have news for you.

You are friends with a footman, Toby. You need not deny it, because I know better. You see, I have been in service for one week to-day.

My mistress is indescribable—a very mammoth among women. Except during prohibited hours, her replica may be seen behind the saloon-bar of any public-house in, say, Bethnal Green. Below stairs she is known as "the dream-child." My master appears to have married, not so much beneath him as beyond him. He is "something in the City." This is as well, for he is nothing in Lancaster Gate. I like him rather.

You would get on with the butler, who is addicted to drink. The ladies of the servants' hall are rather trying, but mean well. The chauffeur is a most superior man. In fact, except that he has been twice convicted of felony and continually boasts of his successful desertion from the Army in 1917, there is nothing against him. My work would be comparatively light if the unfortunate resemblance, to which I have alluded above, were less pronounced. In a word, the butler's working day finishes at 2 p.m., and on two occasions I have had to repair to "The Blue Goat" as late as seven-thirty to hale him out of the taproom in time for dinner. His carriage in the dining-room, when he can hardly see, is one of the wonders of the world.

Of course I go out with the car—usually to a wedding. The solemnization of matrimony, especially if one of the parties is of noble birth, draws the dream-child as a magnet the steel. Need I say that she is an uninvited guest? Yesterday, at the wedding of a young Marquess, she was stopped at the doors. "Lef' me card at 'ome," was her majestic reply. Before they had recovered, she was in the aisle. Having regard to her appearance, I am of opinion that such conduct is libellous.

On Monday she gave what she calls a "Serciety Crush." This was well attended, chiefly by aliens, many of whom wore miniature decorations, to which, I fear, they were not entitled. These were, I fancy, hired with the dress-coats to which they were fastened. That they enjoyed the viands is emphasised by the fact that, prior to their departure, several of the guests concealed about their persons such delicacies as the flight of time alone had prevented them from consuming. But for the indisposition of the butler, I should have spent a most amusing evening.

Little altercations between my master and mistress are of frequent occurrence. Occa-

sionally they appeal to me to settle the dispute. Once I actually took the liberty of separating them. Indeed, as recently as yesterday evening the dream-child, who had been keeping up her reading, observed that "the rilewise was thinkin' of givin' up the narrer gorge."

"Gage, me dear—gage," says Mr. Slumper.

"That's right," says his wife with hideous irony. "Put yer betters to rights, Schooly. Ugh, I wonder yer dare! An' wot do you know abaout it, you hugly worm?"

Stung to the quick by the painful accuracy of this appellative, her husband was understood to mutter that he had rather be an ill-favoured worm than an overdressed parrot with a swollen head.

Only waiting to throw a glass of water in his direction, the dream-child demanded my ruling in a voice shaking with indignation.

I immediately declared in favour of "gouge"—a decision for which Mr. Slumper, to whom victory is even more terrible than defeat, will thank me yet.

Of such is my life. Either Saturday or Sunday afternoon I go off duty. Then I dive into the country and visit my dog, who is well cared for. We spend a hilarious few hours, and Lancaster Gate is never mentioned. In the servants' hall, by the way, I am credited with a delicate wife—an impression which I have taken care not to correct, for where there are gathered together eight single ladies, les avantages de mariage *cannot be over-estimated.*

And now I must take up the tea.

If ever you receive this letter, find time to reply. I know I have spoken ill of your handwriting, but I take it all back.

Bien à toi, vieux sot,
ANTHONY LYVEDEN.

Anthony, then, was surveying himself, if you remember, in a long mirror. He had just taken up the tea. He was taking a second look at what he could see of his back, when the front-door bell rang. Even at this elevation there was no mistaking its deep peremptory note. Lyveden descended the stairs.

He opened the door faultlessly to find himself face to face with a man who had been his first servant when his battery had been in France.

For a moment the two footmen stared at one another. Then—

"Glad to see you, Walters," said Lyveden heartily.

"Same to you, sir," said Walters, touching his hat. "An', beggin' your pardon, sir, is Lady 'Elen at 'ome?"

"There's no Lady Helen here," said Lyveden. "This is Mrs. Slumper's house."

"Oh, very good, sir," said Walters jerkily. "Sorry to 'ave troubled you, sir." He touched his hat and turned away nervously. . . .

Anthony continued to hold the door open till the car should have passed on.

Walters was making his report. It appeared that this was unsatisfactory, for a moment later he was again at the door.

"Excuse me, sir, but would you speak to my lady?"

Lyveden descended the steps.

From the luxury of a smart landaulette a dame of some consequence regarded him shrewdly. She had, of course, witnessed the comedy upon the steps.

"Who lives here?" she demanded haughtily.

Lyveden drew himself up.

"Mrs. Slumper, madam."

His statement was received with an irrational suspicion.

"Indeed! I didn't know that Lady Helen Amiens had let her house."

"Neither, madam, did I."

The great lady stared at Anthony, who looked straight ahead. Then—

"I—I beg your pardon," she murmured.

Anthony bowed and turned on his heel. As he passed Walters, who was standing wide-eyed, the latter touched his hat faithfully.

When the car had passed on, Anthony closed the door thoughtfully. It had not occurred to him that the house had been hired as it stood. Certainly the Slumpers had given no hint of such a state of affairs. Probably they felt it to be beneath their dignity. It being no affair of his, Lyveden decided to keep his own counsel.

* * * * *

Two days later Anthony visited Patch for the second time.

The same relentless train that had rushed the two down to Hertfordshire that dreadful Thursday had become an easy-going friend. By pocketing his lunch, Lyveden could catch it with anything under five minutes to spare. This gave the two another three-quarters of an hour.

Their second meeting was a replica of the first.

Anthony was admitted, announced his desire, and sat down in the dim hall. Presently a brisk familiar step made itself

heard—firm little paws meeting the tough linoleum squarely—and Anthony rose to his feet. Out of a passage came Patch readily, the fair-haired girl behind him bidding him go ahead. For a moment he looked about him. Then he saw Lyveden, stiffened and stood stock still. The next second, with his body clapped to the floor, he had darted sharply across and, laying his head sideways, crouched at his idol's feet—an adoring suppliant, craving to be raised.



"'But I gave you a chance, I did' . . . She regarded him furiously. 'Ugh! I'm fed up with the bunch of yer. Nasty, ungrateful swabs!



I serpose yer kin 'ave Monday, can't yer?' 'I will take Monday, madam.' The malevolent pig's eyes followed him in silence till he was out of the room."

"Why, Patch . . ."

The white scrap quivered and flung up a panting visage. Lyveden stooped and gathered him in his arms. The terrier licked his face frantically. Then he squirmed like a mad thing till he was down, tore to a basket of logs, and of his strength brought a billet gripped in his big mouth and laid it at Anthony's feet.

The girl laughed merrily

"What did I tell you?" said Lyveden. "It's just the way of his heart. I must always have a present when I have been away."

Lord and squire went for a wonderful walk. The woodland and meadows of Hertfordshire fairly beggared the Parks. . . .

Tea at a tiny inn sunk in a dell through which a sleepy lane trickled between high banks—tea in the pocket garden under

sweet-smelling limes, where stocks stood orderly and honeysuckle sprawled over the brick-nogging, brought back old days of happy fellowship, just to outshine their memory.

From the cool of the house came on a sudden the click of metal and the swift whirr of wheels. Somewhere a clock was in labour—an old, old timepiece, to whom the telling of the hours was a grave matter. A moment later a thin old voice piped out the birth of a new period.

Five o'clock.

Peacefully Lyveden expelled a cloud of smoke. He need not be moving for another quarter of an hour. Upon the warm red bricks at his feet Patch lay dozing after his dish of weak tea.

"Could you give it me in the garden?"

The fresh clear voice floated out of the doorway just in front of my lady herself. Arrived there, she stood for a moment looking pleasedly round. It is doubtful whether the old woodwork had ever before framed such a picture.

There was nothing remarkable about the dress, except her wearing of it. There is a grace of carriage that will make purple of sackcloth. Still, the gown was well cut of fawn-coloured stuff, which her stockings and shoes matched. Her face was generous—proud, too, yet tender and very beautiful. The soft rose of her cheeks, the misty blue of her eyes stood there for gentleness, the curve of the red lips for pride. Wisdom sat in her temples under the thick dark hair. Strength herself had moulded the exquisite chin. And a rogue of a dimple was there to mock the lot of them—the print of the delicate finger of Laughter herself, set in a baby's cheek twenty-five years before. A tiny watch upon a silk strap served to enhance the slenderness of a white wrist. Against the dark cloud of hair, which they were setting straight, the pointed fingers stood out like living statuary. Lifted elbows gave you the graceful line of her figure: the short skirt, ankles to match the wrists.

Looking upon her, Lyveden forgot the world. He may be forgiven, for she was a sight for sore eyes.

Having set her hair to her liking, she put on her hat, pulling it down with a fine careless confidence such as no manner of mirror could give.

She had not seen Lyveden when Patch, counting her Irish terrier an intruder, took him suddenly by the throat. . . .

In an instant the place was Bedlam.

My lady hovered about the combatants, one hand to her breast, the other snatching frantically at her favourite's tail: Lyveden leapt to his feet and, cramming his pipe into a pocket, flung himself forward: the mistress of the inn and her maid crowded each other in the doorway, emitting cries of distress: and the now ravening flurry of brown and white raged snarling and whirling upon the brick pavement with all the finished frightfulness of the *haute école*.

Arrived at close quarters, Anthony cast a look round. Then he picked up the pair anyhow and swung them into the water-butt two paces away.

For a moment the contents boiled, seething as if possessed. Then, with a fearful convulsion, the waves parted and the water gave up its prey. Two choking, gasping, spluttering heads appeared simultaneously: with one accord four striving paws clawed desperately at the rim of the butt. The fight was off.

Intelligently the girl stepped up on to a convenient bench, and Anthony lifted the Irish terrier out of his watery peril. As was to be expected, he shook himself inconsiderately, and Anthony, who was not on the bench, was generously bedewed. Then Patch was hauled out by the scruff of his neck . . . So far as could be seen, neither of the dogs was one penny the worse. There had been much cry, but little wool.

Lyveden turned to my lady and raised his hat.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said. "My dog was entirely to blame."

"D'you mind controlling him now?" she said coldly.

Lyveden called Patch, and the Sealyham trotted up, shaking the water out of his ears as he came. Wet as he was, the man picked him up and put him under his arm.

"I hope your dog isn't hurt," he said quietly. "I'm very sorry."

The girl did not deign to answer, but, stepping down from her perch, summoned her terrier and strolled down the little greensward with her chin in the air.

Anthony bit his lip. Then he turned on his heel and, clapping his hat on his head, tramped into the inn. A moment later he had paid his reckoning and was out on the road. After all, he reflected, Patch wasn't to blame. He had acted according to his lights.

When he was out of sight of the inn, Anthony sat down by the wayside and dried

his terrier's ears with his pocket-handkerchief and the utmost care.

* * * * *

The rain was coming down in sheets, and, in spite of the mackintosh which he was wearing above his livery, drops were beginning to make their unpleasant way down Anthony's neck. His feet had been wet for hours. The violence of the l nguage employed by the press of grooms and footmen huddled about him at the doors of the Opera House suggested that their plight was no less evil.

It was a big night, and of "the distinguished audience" Mr. and Mrs. Slumper were making two. They were inexpressibly bored, but that was beside the point. By occupying two stalls, Mrs. Slumper was sure they were doing the right thing. A box would have been better, of course, but there had been some difficulty, and Slumper, being a weak-kneed fool, had been bluffed into taking the stalls. Mrs. Slumper would like to see the clerk who could bluff her. By dint of concentrating upon her grievance, she had worked herself into a passion by the end of the second act . . .

It continued to rain copiously.

At last flunkeys appeared and set the inner swing-doors wide open. A blasphemous murmur of relief went up from the company of servants.

"Bet yer my gint's fust," squeaked a little bow-legged Cockney. "'E's a fair winner, 'e is." A pompous prelate appeared in the lobby, walking with an air of having just consecrated the building free of charge, and followed by a nervous-lipped lady and a deacon who looked like a startled owl. "There y'are! Wot 'd I sy?" he added, turning to scuttle off to his car.

"Ser long, 'Arry!" cried somebody. "See yer at Ciro's."

There was an explosion of mirth.

The rain, the discomfort, the waiting—three familiar malefactors—all in a moment discomfited by a sudden guffaw, reminded Lyveden vividly of his service in France. His thoughts ramped back to the old days, when there was work and to spare—work of a kind. Of course, the competition was not so keen. . .

People were coming fast now, and the entrances to the lobby were getting choked. Attendants were bellowing big names, innumerable engines were running, the police were shouting orders, gears were being changed.

"Number a nundred and one!" thundered a voice.

"Right!" cried Anthony, elbowing his way out of the crush.

He made his way quickly to where he had left the car.

The information that his employers were awaiting his services was received by the chauffeur with a volley of invective, which dealt more particularly with Mrs. Slumper's pedigree, but touched lightly upon a whole variety of subjects, including the ultimate destination of all composers and the uses of rain.

It was full five minutes before the limousine was able to be brought close enough to the entrance for Anthony to leave the running-board and advise his master. When it was next in order but two, he stepped on to the pavement and struggled towards the entrance. As he was about to tell an attendant to summon "101," a car slid into position, and the fellow set his hand on the door.

"Forty-six waiting!" he bawled.

A glance at the steps showed the approach of quality—all cloaks and soft hair and slim silk stockings—the attendant threw open the door and Lyveden stood still.

The taller of the two women was the second to enter the car. As she stood waiting, she glanced round quickly. Her eyes met Anthony's, rested a moment of time, and then swept on without a flicker . . . A second later the door had slammed upon her high heels.

Lyveden was left to feel the blood come flaming into his face, to wonder whether my lady had known him again, and to stuff the breath of an exquisite perfume into the same reliquary as held the picture of a tall dark figure setting her hair to rights in the mouth of an inn.

* * * * *

Upon the next Saturday a particularly smart wedding was to take place. Anthony, who had seen the announcements, was prepared for the worst. Sure enough, on Friday afternoon, as he was clearing the table of tea—

"I shall want yer to-morrow," said Mrs. Slumper. "I 'ave to go to the weddin' o' that there Finnigan boy. I'm sure I'm sick o' crushes, but 'er ladyship would never fergive me if I diddun show up."

Anthony hesitated with the tray in his hands.

"Mr. Hopkins is taking Sunday, madam, so I can't go out then."

"I can't 'elp that," was the testy reply.

"I don't wish to inconvenience you, madam, but, as it was arranged that I should always have——"

"Subjec' to *my* convenience," snapped Mrs. Slumper. "That's wot I said." She had said nothing of the sort. "An' am I to go pushin' orf to a dandy crush without a servant? Hopenin' me own dores, an' fetchin' me own car, an' wot not, jus' like a common beggar in a 'ired fly? Look 'ere, young man, I didn't ought to 'ave took you at all, reelly. Wot with no refs an' no experience, yer might 'ave walked the soles orf of yer perishin' boots before yer got into a 'ouse like this. But I gave you a chance, I did. An' if you think ter try an' turn me own words agains' me an' talk 'igh about contrax, yer kin jus' shove orf." She regarded him furiously. "Ugh! I'm fed up with the bunch of yer. Nasty, ungrateful swabs! I serpose yer kin 'ave Monday, can't yer?"

"I will take Monday, madam."

The malevolent pig's eyes followed him in silence till he was out of the room. . . .

It was on Monday, then, that Lyveden called for his dog.

His decision to revisit the scene of his encounter with my lady was not fully formed until it was time to act upon it. He had deliberately walked in the direction of the inn, so that, when the hour came, he could, if he chose, indulge the inclination of which he was wholly ashamed. Honestly, he reflected, he had not a good word to say for the girl. (Observe, please, that the fact that the pleasaunce was to his liking did not weigh with him. The little inn and its curtilage had become but *environs*.) She had been unreasonable and worse than churlish. There was no getting away from it—she had been aggressively rude, administering a rebuff though he had made no advance. To pile Ossa upon Pelion, she now knew him for what he was—a flunkey, acting the gentleman and sporting a dog. And was not that a dainty dish for him to digest, sitting under the lime-trees in full view of that garden doorway which nine days ago had been so honoured? That, of course, was the trouble. Anthony had seen a picture which he could not forget. The girl had done her best to efface it, but had only succeeded in clouding a sunny memory.

With something of the *mauvaise honte* with which a player of "Patience" corrects a mistake he has made by restoring some cards, Anthony took Ossa off Pelion, said to himself, "I don't believe she recognised me," and, walking into the inn, desired the mistress to bring him some tea.

By the time he had finished his meal he had sunk so low in his own eyes—lost so much self-respect—that the rest did not seem worth keeping, and he inquired whether anything had been seen of the lady whose dog his had fought, in much the same spirit of recklessness as a bravo tosses his last piece to a beggar.

"She had tea here the day before yesterday, sir," replied his hostess. "All alone, with her little dog. I don't think he's none the worse, sir Thank you. Good day, sir."

Anthony left the house like a man in a dream. . . .

Why had she come?

To this question the answer which his heart vouchsafed was vain and a vanity. His head, however, gave innumerable replies—all of them obvious and none of them flattering. A hundred times Reason drove Hope headlong, but always the baggage returned. . . .

By way of relieving his feelings, Anthony cursed Mrs. Slumper with earnest bitterness. He began to feel that there was much in what the chauffeur had said about her forbears. At the time he had secretly deplored his epithets, but now . . . . Certainly he had misjudged the fellow. He was quite right.

As for Patch, he had never been paid so little attention. Not that he cared. The country was full of scents. . . .

By a quarter past seven Lyveden was back at Lancaster Gate.

The first thing he saw below stairs was the library silver, which he had cleaned that morning and the parlourmaid should have restored to its place. Without waiting to change, he picked up the tray and carried it upstairs, intending, if the room was unoccupied, to replace it at once.

As he gained the hall, the twitch of an inserted latch-key came to his ears. Then pressure was put upon the front door. This, however, remained fast shut. The key was withdrawn violently, reinserted, and wrenched. The pressure upon the door being maintained, the lock was jammed. Whosoever was there had lost his temper and was kicking against the pricks. This was unlike Mr. Slumper, but it could be nobody else. Lyveden set down his tray and stepped to the door. . . .

His master came in with a rush, stumbling. Anthony caught him, and he recovered his balance. There was running sweat upon

his face, which was all grey, and he was shaking fearfully. Holding on to the furniture as he went, he tottered as far as the library, clawed at the switch by the door, missed it, and swayed out of sight into the black of the room.

Anthony stood spellbound. The spectacle of a bunch of keys dangling idly from the keyhole of the door, which he was still holding open, brought him to his senses, and, drawing the key from the lock, he closed the door swiftly and ran for brandy. . . .

Mr. Slumper was sitting in the dark, with his head plunged between his knees. At Anthony's coming he started up and would have gone back, but, the seat of his chair catching him under the hocks, he subsided again almost immediately. Anthony went to his side and held the glass to his lips. As he drank, his teeth chattered upon the rim of the tumbler, and some of the spirit ran over his chin. Twice he made a gesture for more. After the third dose he had swallowed more than a tumblerful. . . . Presently he began to look less grey, and the trembling abated. In three or four minutes he was quite calm. Anthony was about to ask if he should help him upstairs, when he spoke suddenly.

"Shut t' door."

Anthony did his bidding. When he came back, his master had a letter-case in his hand.

"What are your wages?" he said.

"Seventy-two pounds a year, sir."

Mr. Slumper put a hand to his brow and knitted this wearily, as if the effort of calculation was more than he could bear. Then he took out two five-pound notes and two one-pound notes.

"There's twelve pound," he said slowly. "One month's wages, and another's in lieu of notice."

Anthony stared at the money.

"I haven't been here a month yet, sir."

His master waved aside the objection.

"Only honest servant I've ever had," he said shortly. "Gentleman, aren't you? Never mind. Couldn't let you down. Others can go to hell, but not you. And now—better clear out. Right away. Get your box and go. Don't let the others see you. Give 'em the slip."

"But—but won't you be dining, sir?" said Anthony desperately. He was trying instinctively to grapple with a situation which had put him upon his back.

At the mention of dinner Mr. Slumper laughed hideously. The brandy was getting into its stride now, and colour was beginning to climb into his cheeks.

"Dining?" he croaked. "Dining?"

In a deliberate, imperturbable tone a clock upon the mantelpiece chimed the half-hour, and the laugh snapped off short. The next moment the man had Lyveden's arm in a grip of iron.

"Listen," he breathed. "I'm broke . . . ruined . . . got to run for it. Couldn't stand gaol at my age. It ain't pretty, I know, but I'm fifty-nine, Lyveden, fifty-nine!" The tense utterance broke into a whimper. "An'—an' that's too old for prison, Lyveden, an' they wouldn't give me a chance. The lawyers 'd make it out bad. You can gamble with others' money as long as you win, Lyveden, but you mustn't lose . . . mustn't ever lose. There's a law against that."

All the soldier in Anthony came to his aid.

"Are you going now, sir?" The other nodded. "Shall I get you a taxi?"

"Yes." Mr. Slumper jerked a contemptuous head at the ceiling. "She'll have to go with me," he added thickly. "Can't leave the old fool."

"I'll keep your keys, sir," said Anthony, "to let myself in."

With that he was gone.

Mrs. Slumper was in the midst of a very delicate operation, to wit, the obliteration of her natural complexion—obsequies which not even her maid was permitted to attend. Consequently she was anything but pleased when her husband entered the room. Such procedure was out of all order and convenience. That he came in suddenly and without first knocking upon the door was insufferable. She turned herself round on her seat, bristling . . .

There was no time for a scene, and, when Mrs. Slumper hurled herself against Necessity, she fell back bruised and broken.

When she would have screamed, a hand was clapped over her mouth, breaking her false teeth, and all her stifled shrieks, queries and expostulations were literally cuffed into a whimper Five minutes later, toothless, half-dressed and trembling, she thrust a few things into a dressing-case, struggled into a fur coat, and passed with sagging knees downstairs, clinging to the arm of a bully whom she had known as a worm.

Lyveden was waiting in the hall, beside him his case and hold-all—what belongings

he had, thrust into them anyhow He was intending to see the couple into the cab and then go quietly away, for he was determined to avoid the loathsome saturnalia with which his colleagues were certain to signalise the *dénâcle.* When the two appeared, he started involuntarily. He had been prepared for violence, he had expected tears . . . The vision of a blubbering idiot, that mowed and mumbled, its wig awry, its dreadful face blotched, like a clown's, with paint, swaddled from head to toe in gorgeous furs, leaning desperately upon the very reed it had broken—this was unearthly, hellish. He found himself praying that it might not visit him in his dreams. . .

It is to his credit that Anthony, having helped Mr. Slumper into his hat and overcoat, and Mr. and Mrs. Slumper into the taxi, flung his own kit upon the canopy and accompanied the fugitives to Charing Cross.

The horror of that drive revisited him for months. The awful pregnant silence, broken only by the sound of rapid irregular respiration, gave to the cab the air of a death-chamber.

Arrived at the station, by his advice the two remained in the taxi whilst he procured tickets which would take them to the coast by the first available train. At the booking-office he learned, to his inexpressible relief, that they had but ten minutes to spare. He bought the tickets feverishly . . .

As his master emerged from the cab, Lyveden perceived with a shock that his nervousness had begun to return. Terror was riding behind, coming up, overhauling him fast. The blood which had flooded his face had begun to recede. The hand that received the tickets and change was trembling. In a fever of anxiety the ex-officer hustled his charges towards the platform . .

People turned and stared as they passed. One woman screamed . . .

At the sudden cry Mr. Slumper started violently. His face was very pale now, and there were tiny beads of sweat upon the side of his nose. His mouth was working painfully. It was a question whether they could board the train before he collapsed. The idiot upon his arm could have shambled another mile.

They came to the barrier.

Anthony had no ticket and could not pass, but he put them into the queue and steered them up to the gate.

The passenger behind Mr. Slumper turned suddenly and brushed against him. At the touch on his shoulder the poor devil started frightfully and drew in his breath with a hoarse whoop. The face that he turned to the offender was a wet grey . . .

In front of them there were only two now —one. They were in the jaws of the barrier... Mr. Slumper had not the power to present his tickets, and the inspector took the pasteboard out of his shaking hand. He clipped it and handed it back, staring. Mr. Slumper fumbled, and the tickets fell to the ground. He stooped drunkenly, and the inspector put a hand under his arm.

"Gent ill 'ere, Joe," he threw over his shoulder, apparently addressing a colleague, whom Anthony could not see. "Give 'im a 'and up the platform."

Anthony heaved a sigh of relief.

The next moment he saw a burly station-constable—presumably "Joe"—step into view and put a broad arm tenderly about his master's back . . .

Mr. Slumper stiffened and stood quivering with the peculiar vibration of a wire that is taut. The ridiculous figure attached to him stood still also, rolling its head foolishly.

"Come along, sir," urged the official in a kindly tone.

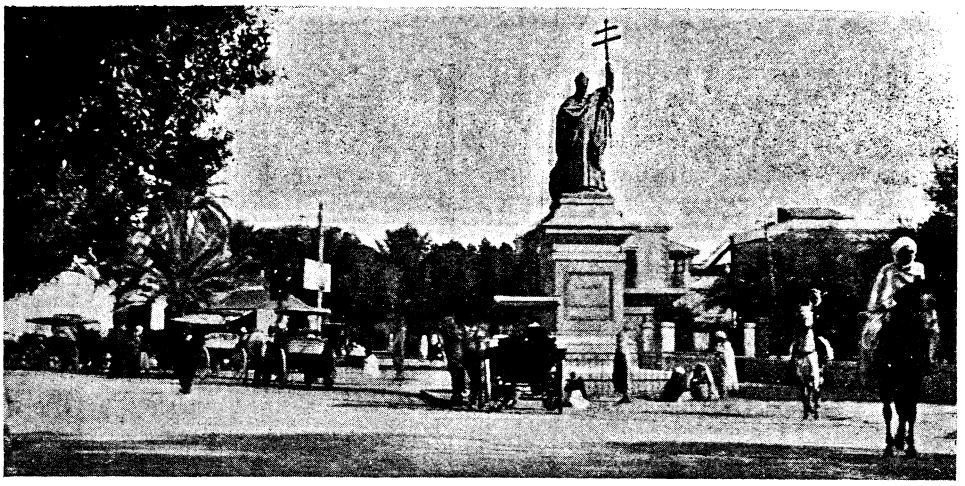
Mr. Slumper stopped shaking, took out his handkerchief, and wiped his face. Then he turned to the speaker.

"It's all right," he said. "*I'll go quietly.*"

Anthony turned on his heel and walked out of the station.

There was no more to be done.

The second story in this series will appear in the next number.



BISKRA: THE SQUARE, WITH STATUE OF CARDINAL LAVIGERIE.

ON THE BORDERS OF THE GREAT SAHARA

BISKRA AND THE GARDEN OF ALLAH

By J. DEARDEN HOLMES

AWAY on the borders of the great Sahara Desert lies the little town of Biskra, familiar to many as Beni-Mora through Mr. Robert Hichens's vivid novel "The Garden of Allah," and the dramatised version of it now being played at Drury Lane with great success. Biskra has been styled the Queen of the Desert, the Queen of the Ziban, Ziban being the plural of Zab—a village. The Ziban is a chain of villages or oases east and west of Biskra, at the foot of the Aurés Mountains. The Algerian State Railway follows roughly the line of the Atlas Mountains in North Africa, parallel with the Mediterranean coast. Branching off at El Guerrah, the railway makes a bee-line for Biskra, where it terminates. Along with your bags, which are bundled into the train at El Guerrah by a merry-eyed Arab boy, the porter pushes into the compartment—a foot-warmer! This, on the way to the Sahara, is puzzling. But as we approach Batna, several thousand feet above sea-level, we find snow on the hills.

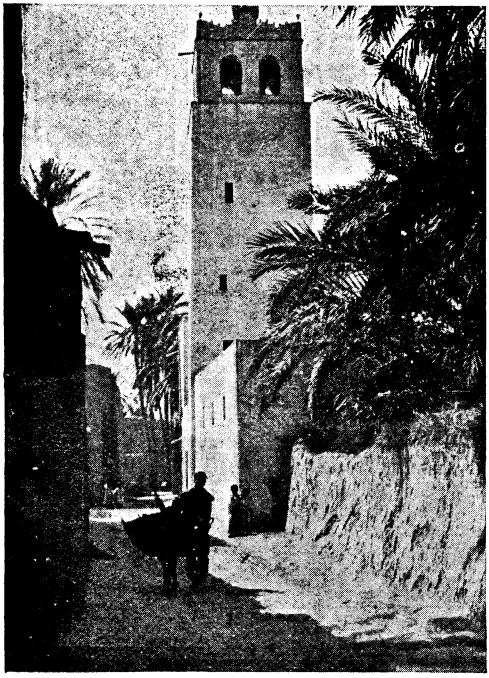
Descending from Batna, the rail takes us through the gorge of El Kantara or the Gateway to the Desert, a delightful oasis of palms and blossoming fruit trees. The huge gap in the rocks seems to have been split by some giant knife. Indeed, the Arabs have a saying that "the sword of Sidi Abdullah cleft the gorge in order that the Arab army might pass safely through." But now it is the turn for the Western conqueror. As the river winds through the gorge, the "iron horse" goes with it, and its companion conqueror, the motor-car, rushes alongside on one of the magnificent roads made by the French in their favourite colony. This particular road runs down to the edge of the desert, and one frequently sees a fine Parisian car whirl past a Bible picture in the shape of an Arab, with feet nearly touching the ground, astride his patient ass.

Arrived at Biskra, we again note this strange combination of East and West. A town of some 4,000 inhabitants, Biskra has its own Town Hall, which, in spite

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of its Moorish architecture, looks painfully modern. Its casino and its hotels, together with its "square," from which rises the statue of Cardinal Lavigerie, look strangely out of keeping with the surrounding mixture of Arabs, Moors, and negroes. Once away from the signs of civilisation, however, we are in another world. We go down a native street, with the sun glaring on its white walls, broken here and there by a little verandah or a primitive wooden awning with a gaudily coloured curtain. Some of its shops, which are mere holes in the wall, display repulsive-looking meat; others the luscious fruits of the East, with all the riot and delicacy of colouring of an artist's palette. We emerge into the market-place, where we are lost amidst a bewildering crowd of Arabs, their bodies enfolded in the graceful woollen burnous and their heads swathed about by the haik to keep out, not the cold, but the intense heat of the Sahara sun; above and between the human medley are occasional camels; beyond the camels, dazzling white flat walls; over and enfringing the walls, the green of the palm trees.

Past the street of the Ouled Naïls (the dancing girls of the desert), with its prominent painted wooden balconies, on towards Old Biskra, there is a strange weird noise, and an Arab procession goes by; at the front, a man in white burnous and his head entirely covered with the haik, excepting a slit for the eyes; behind and around him a group of merry dark-skinned children; then three stalwart Arabs carrying poles with huge blankety flags unknown to the European; after them the "band" with its barbaric music of reeds and tom-toms; in the rear a motley crowd of Arabs and negroes, true children of the desert. As the rude and primitive music dies away, it has taken us with it; we are conscious of its answering echo within.

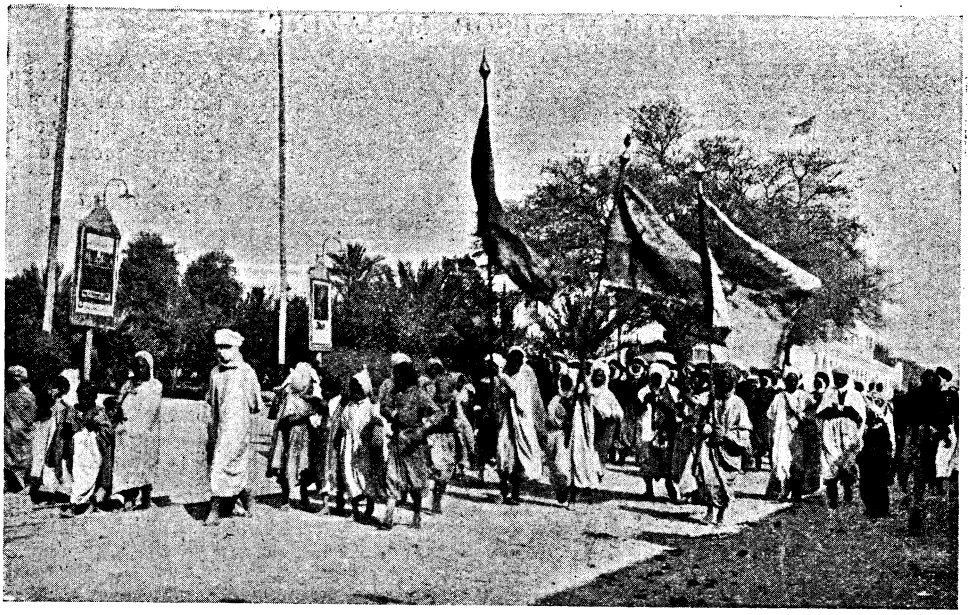


A MOSQUE IN OLD BISKRA.



THE NEGRO VILLAGE FOUNTAIN, BISKRA.

Now we are near Old Biskra. Native women, beating clothes on the stones by the side of a stream, disappear shyly as we approach. We are going down a country lane in Old Biskra. In the centre, where the fierce sun penetrates, there is the golden sand of Africa. At the side are walls of rich yellow and brown earth topped by rough grass, and, over all, the palms, "their feet on the earth and their heads in the fires of heaven"; coming up the lane, an Arab with his panniered donkey; in the far distance houses and walls of baked mud, and the square tower of a mosque, with



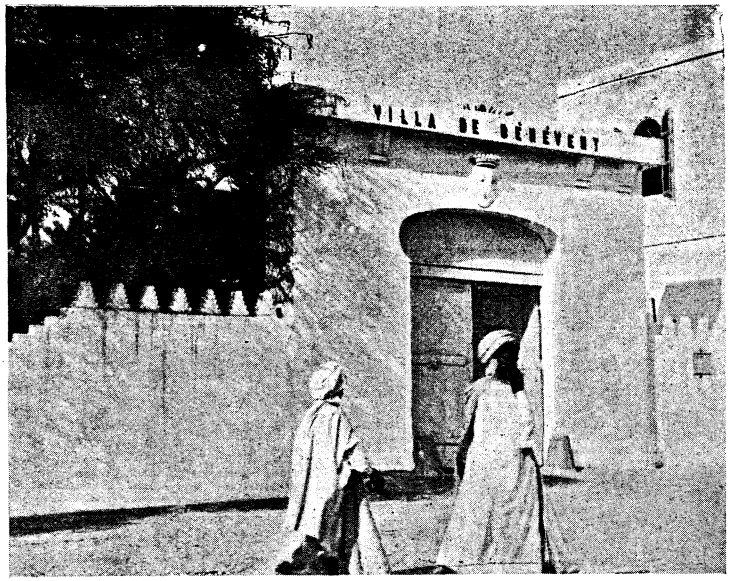
A NATIVE FÊTE.

mysterious slits in its dazzling white walls. The heat, although dry and even exhilarating, is so intense that we are glad to put up an umbrella until we once again reach the cool and welcome shade of the houses or the palms. Here we are introduced to "Batouche." We have no reason to doubt, as, cigarette held lightly between fingers, he speaks intelligently in slightly broken English. On the road to the "Garden," just outside Biskra, we pass the negro village, with umber-coloured baked mud walls. A little group of negro children, in the brilliantly coloured cottons so dear to the East, are induced by coppers, dear to East and West, to pose for us. By the roadside is a square stone fountain with rounded dome, the water bringing life to the patient, if somewhat lazy, negroes near the spout: the pool below reflecting the deep intense blue of the African sky.

Further on, at the right, we see the white



THE NATIVE MARKET-PLACE, BISKRA.



THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAMOUS GARDEN OF THE VILLA DE BÉNÉVENT.

walls of the "Jardin Landon," the retreat of "Count Anteoni," the eight tall arches outlined against the palm trees, looking like some strange Eastern viaduct. Passing through the gateway, over which is the inscription "Villa de Bénévent," we find ourselves in the now famous Garden. Here is the *salon*, or the room of the little dog, a purple china dog, which one might almost say was the mascot of the strange solitary Count. The sun is forcing its way through the leaves of the palms and cocoa-nut trees on to a small square one-storied, flat-roofed building. The shade of the leaves on the white walls is a delicate purple in contrast with the vivid yellow-white of the patches of sunlight. From the ground rise two long windows, composed of scores of small square panes of glass, ending in Moorish arches. As we peer through with eyes unaccustomed for the moment to the mysterious darkness, we can just distinguish the gilded chairs of the *salon*. How real it all seems! Farther on, through an avenue of palms, we see the smoking-room of the Count. The sunlight through the trees splashes on the ground of golden sand and on the glorious purple bougainvillea as it droops in flaming masses on the flat white walls. As we go through the open doorway we are surprised to find it unoccupied. We had almost expected to see the smoke curling through the open window-ways, and the tall middle-aged man with the bright eyes seated on one of the low broad divans.

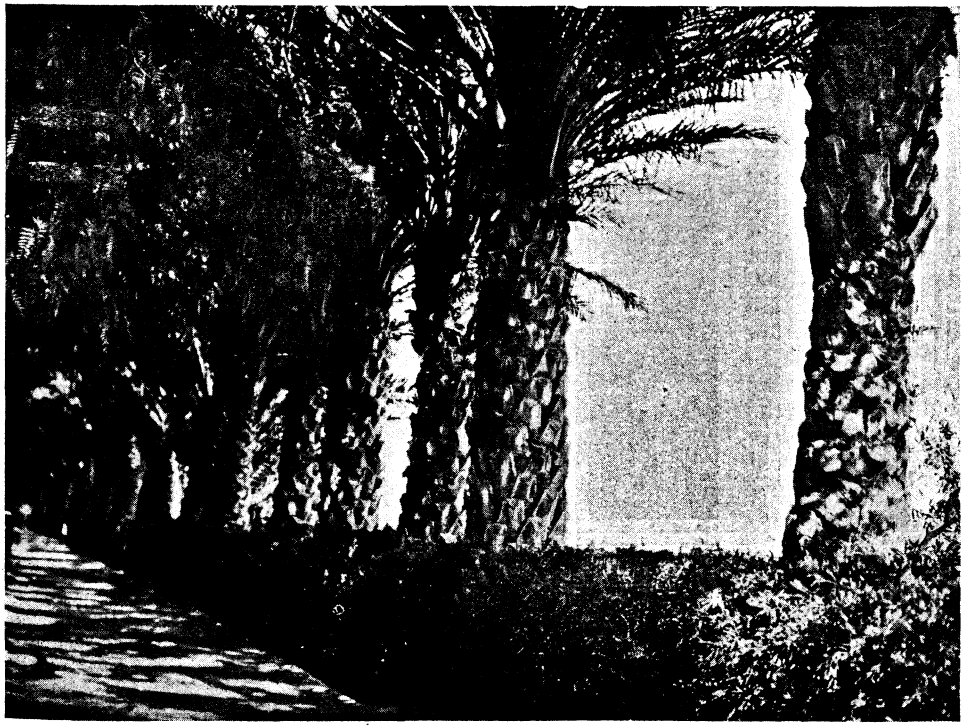
We lean back on the soft cushions and look through the open window opposite, from the arch of which there still hangs the Moorish copper lamp, and feel a sense of disappointment that he was not there to meet us! Outside, along the trimly kept winding golden paths, fringed and embowered with every variety of palm and tropical tree, something of the peace the world cannot give steals over us. In a



ONE OF THE SEPARATE BUILDINGS IN THE GARDEN: "THE COUNT'S SALON, OR THE ROOM OF THE LITTLE DOG."



AN OASIS VIEWED FROM ONE OF THE OUTER WALKS OF THE GARDEN.



PALMS ALONG THE WALK OVERLOOKING THE SAHARA.

quiet, far corner of the Garden, we are told, Mr. Hichens wrote much of his book.

Now we are walking down a magnificent palm grove quite on the edge of the desert. Rising from a long, well-trimmed hedge,



A GARDEN WALK.

the tall, regular trunks look like huge species of straight pineapples; but they are something more, and the bold but graceful foliage forms a fitting crown for the king of the tropics. Biskra contains some 700,000 palm trees. We are walking by the low white wall where Domini loved to sit and dream. On the road beneath there passes an occasional native, now on foot and now on mule, sometimes two on a mule; a poor negress with her children, squalid bundles of rags; straggling herds of goats; further out, the stray tents of the Bedouins; in the middle distance, a caravan with its string of camels gliding stealthily along, and beyond—the desert.

What is it that holds us? The camels become smaller and smaller. . . . They are mere tiny specks. . . . They are—gone! Whither? . . . Is that Larbi with his flute? We hear the strains of the Song of the Sahara, as hauntingly rendered in the novel: "No one but God and I knows what is in my heart!"

We have been out to Sidi Okba, the tomb of the great Arab warrior, and are returning.

The sun is sinking behind the oasis of Biskra. To the right the huge rocky shoulders of the Aurés Mountains have put on a soft mantle of exquisite rose colour, melting into an indescribably delicate blue in the shadows. The sun is dipping behind



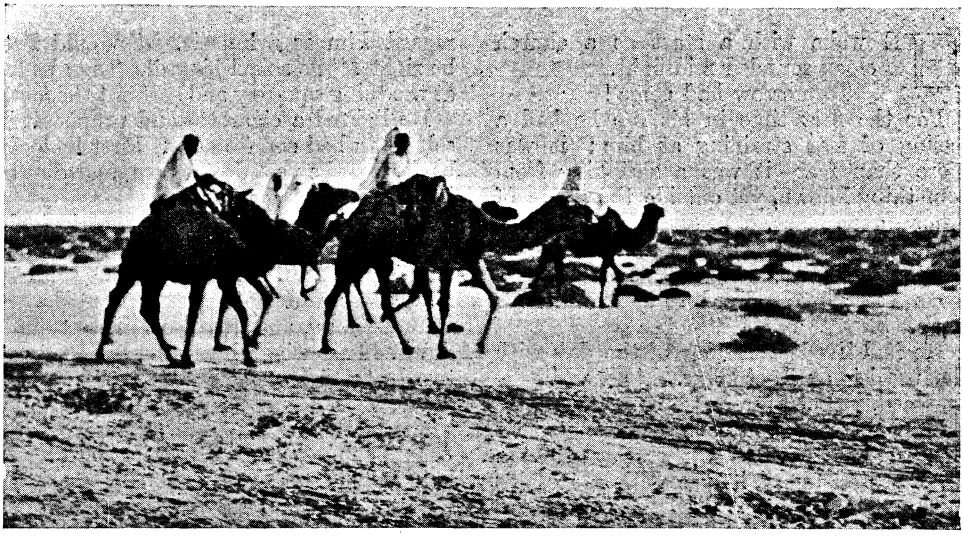
ANOTHER BUILDING IN THE GARDEN: "THE COUNT'S DEN."

the low line of purple hills to the left. Now he has set, covering the horizon with a royal robe of crimson, which, merging into pale yellow and green, finally joins the great blue dome overhead. The stars are

raising their lamps above as they only can in the East. As we near the oasis, the dark green line of palm trees is silhouetted against the crimson sky, and the little pools of water in the foreground are so many magic mirrors of gold.

Behind us there creeps over the desert a surpassingly lovely haze of shimmering blue which slowly curtains the rose-coloured mountains beyond. No eye can penetrate it. Seeing we may see, but not perceive.

"The desert is the Garden of Allah."



CROSSING THE SAHARA.

IDEALA.

NOW get you hence, you sorrows
That vexed me long and sore,
And for a hundred morrows,
You sorrows, come no more.

Now fly you far, you sorrows,
Before this love of mine,
That lights a hundred morrows
With womanhood divine.

I'll watch her soul, you sorrows,
Her beauty, and be wise;
I'll gaze, a hundred morrows,
You sorrows, in her eyes.

ERIC CHILMAN.

TO-MORROW

By LLOYD WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

HE woke with a start as a church clock sounded midnight.

To-morrow had come!

For the first time in his life he had a feeling of fear straining at him; it was more than fear—it was a shrinking from something known, yet outside the range of human experience.

Since the world began, had such a thing happened before?

He had already lived to-morrow in his sleep.

He had lived each hour of the day with the precision of actuality. And while he dreamed, he knew it was to-morrow. Everything that was going to happen—except only one thing—was already known to him.

He stared about in the darkness of his room as if measuring himself against the unknown power that had torn down the veil that hangs between now and presently. Was he quite sane? Was he quite awake?

He switched on the light, looking round at well-known, commonplace objects curiously—the bookshelves, wardrobe, chest of drawers, the golf clubs in the corner, portraits on the mantelshelf, his one or two prints, his clothes tossed down carelessly on a chair, a copy of "Marcus Aurelius" on a table by the bed. Everything was absurdly commonplace. The door leading into the adjoining room, which was bath and dressing-room combined, stood ajar. He slipped out of bed, switched on the light there, too, and looked about him. He wished to assure himself that everything was normal.

"Am I normal?"

That was the question.

The feeling of fear had passed. Whatever to-morrow brought forth, he must face it. But he was standing on the edge of things, between present and future, and he knew both.

If he were to wake up old Petty, who waited on him, and say to him, "Petty, I have dreamed of everything that is going to happen to-morrow," Petty would regard him as a lunatic. "Would Petty be right?" he asked himself. "Let us look at the thing squarely and sort out the facts."

He lighted a cigarette and propped himself up in bed comfortably. First he looked back over the past day or two, and the time just before going to bed.

He had been a trifle overworked, but there was nothing unusual in that. When a man is on the point of getting married, he presses fortune eagerly; but he was fit and strong, and not at all likely to break down. Last night he had read up one or two law points until about half-past nine; then, after a stroll round the Temple, he went to bed with a copy of "Marcus Aurelius" because secretly he thought him the greatest bore that ever lived, and felt sure of falling asleep at once.

A glance over all that was enough.

Then he turned his eyes to to-morrow.

The church clock struck again; it was one in the morning now. For practical purposes the day would not begin for another six hours, yet he had already lived most of it, and he recalled his dream.

Petty came into the room and turned on the bath water. "A pleasant morning, sir, but I believe we are going to have rain."

Commonplace words enough, and it remained to be seen if, when seven o'clock came, Petty would use that precise form. He remembered taking his bath and shaving; he gave himself a slight cut on the chin. Then he went down to breakfast, and found three letters awaiting him. He remembered glancing at the address of the top one. Someone had misspelt his name, calling him "Basil Charters," instead of "Basil Charteris."

That envelope contained nothing of consequence. He could not remember what it was—probably a circular. The second letter was from an old friend. Purvis was running in to see him that morning. "I want you to do me a favour."

The third letter came from a man making an appointment for golf. The appointment

was registered in his mind—Saturday, at three, on Banstead Downs.

The day was stretched out before him just as if he had actually lived it instead of merely dreaming it. There was a chaffing dialogue with old Petty, who never understood jokes. Then he——

No, steady! Here was a gap. For the next hour he could not fill in what had happened. He had dreamed it accurately, but it had escaped his memory. For some time he fidgeted over it, trying to recall what it was that happened between nine and ten.

At ten Purvis rushed in. His wife had been taken ill, and he wanted Charteris to take over a case he was engaged in that day.

It was a straightforward case, and Charteris could do it "on his head." No, he wouldn't take any denial. Here was the brief. "The affair won't last half an hour, so you'll pick up ten guineas easily," said Purvis.

He disliked this practice of taking briefs without due time for preparation, but there was no denying Purvis. Besides, the matter was simple, and he seized the details of the brief clearly.

He hurried away to Epsom, arriving a little late. He remembered apologising to the judge and telling the man opposed to him, in a whisper, to "cut it short," because it was useless to drag out the case.

Then the unexpected happened. A woman giving evidence blurted out something of which no one had had notice; he found himself embroiled in a dispute with the judge, who wanted to rule it out as irrelevant. The case wore on until late in the afternoon, and he remembered his long cross-examination of a grim-looking individual, who was accounted one of the saints of the town, but was found to be living a double life.

He won his case with difficulty, but he had done more than win a case. He had made a name. When he got back to London, the papers were already dealing with it. They called it "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Epsom." How he laughed! A side-wind, a mere fluke, had done what years of hard work had missed. Henceforth he was a well-known man.

Scarcely had he reached his chambers, when Elsie rushed in. She had read about his triumph, and came with hands outstretched and kisses to congratulate him.

He remembered just how she put it.

"I'm not a bit prouder of you, dear, than I was yesterday, but I'm glad you have come into your own."

It was such an "occasion" that they felt they must have dinner together, and go to a theatre without troubling to book seats or dress. Elsie chose Wyndham's, and his dream gave him just as clear vision of the play as if he had actually seen it. He could have repeated the story and discussed the acting. He lay in bed puzzling over this for a long time. Perhaps he had read a criticism of the piece when it first came out, and memory was merely playing a trick on him; yet it was amazing how well he remembered it.

And so his dream carried him to the last scene of the day—the scene that was unfinished. His cigarette went out, and he found himself gripping the bedclothes tightly as he thought of it.

He had seen Elsie home, but refused to go inside for a sandwich and a cigarette, because he must catch a train back to Town. It was on his way to the station that the unexpected happened.

He became aware that a man was following him. He must have been an absurdly clumsy creature, for he would run a few paces and then stop. On looking round, he saw his pursuer slink into the shadow.

The affair was ridiculous and bordering on cheap melodrama, but it got on his nerves, and at last he stood still and waited.

"Don't hide yourself," he said impatiently. "If you have anything to say, come and say it."

The man seemed to hesitate, but at last he emerged into a ring of light provided by a lamp. He was shabby and wild-looking, and his movements uncertain and furtive.

"Who the devil are you?" asked Charteris.

There was no answer except a kind of foolish chuckle.

Charteris began to grow uneasy. A hint of the truth had come to him. This man was a lunatic, and sometimes madmen. . . .

The man came nearer.

"Perhaps you don't know me," he said.

Charteris peered at him in the doubtful light, wondering if he were someone he knew; but he was a total stranger.

"Why don't you pretend you never saw me before?" said the man.

"There's no pretence about it. I haven't seen you before," replied Charteris. "You have mistaken me for someone else."

But he had a notion that the stranger

was not listening; he was in the frame of mind when words make no impression. He was looking behind him with a childishly secretive air, as if to make sure they were alone. He came closer, and Charteris instinctively drew his fist from his pocket to defend himself.

But no defence was possible, for the attack was too sudden.

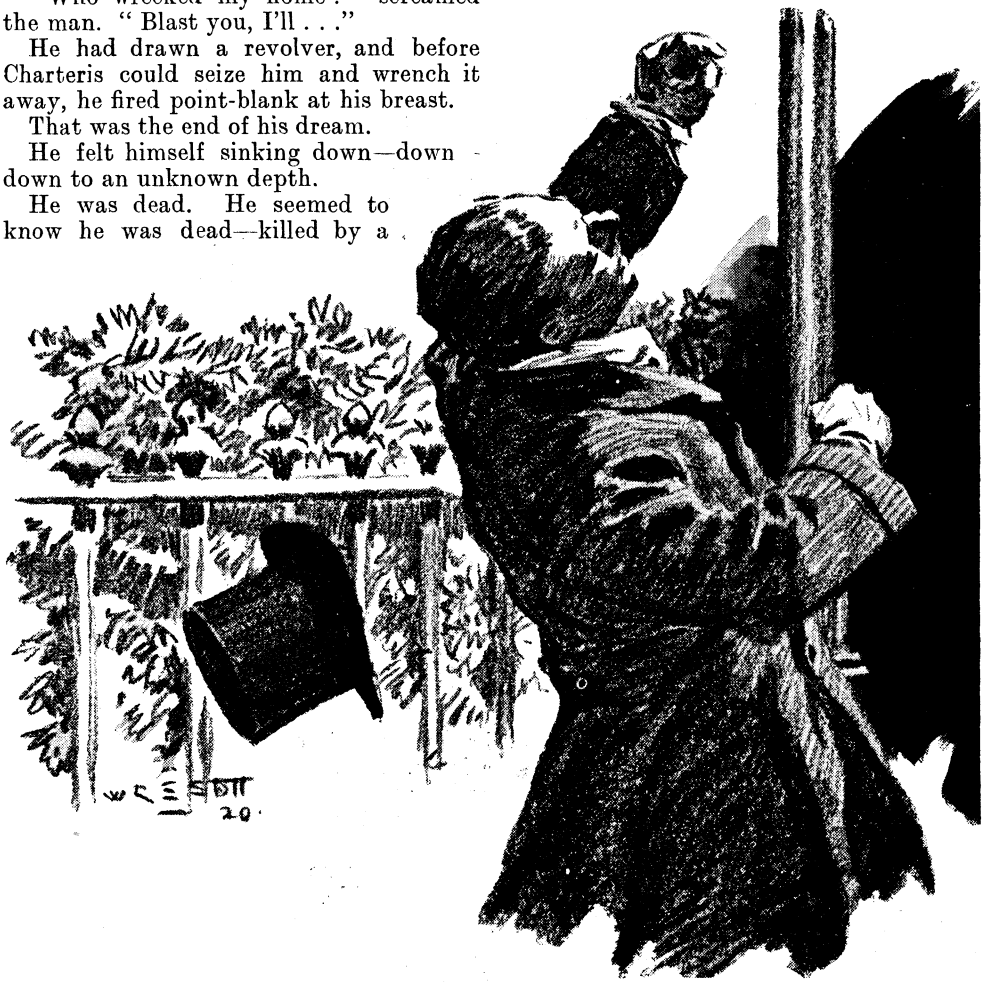
"Who wrecked my home?" screamed the man. "Blast you, I'll . . ."

He had drawn a revolver, and before Charteris could seize him and wrench it away, he fired point-blank at his breast.

That was the end of his dream.

He felt himself sinking down—down down to an unknown depth.

He was dead. He seemed to know he was dead—killed by a maniac who had obviously mistaken him for another.



"Charteris sprang forward, but the other was too quick. The revolver cracked off full in his face, as it seemed, and he fell."

He was not afraid to die, but there was something brutally stupid in this. Was he really to be snuffed out by such a disaster?

For some hours he lay awake thinking over his experience.

What should a man do? Dreams are only dreams, yet there was a kind of pitiless accuracy about this that dismayed him.

Suppose it came true!

Suppose, when morning came, the day began to arrange itself just as he had dreamed, would he be a foolish coward if he deliberately avoided the possibility of that shot?

It was not till nearly four o'clock that he fell asleep, and when he woke, Petty was already in his room

"A pleasant morning, sir, but I believe we are going to have rain," said the old man.

To-morrow had begun.

II.

CHARTERIS stared at his letters.

The top one was addressed "Basil

Charters," and it contained a circular from a wine merchant with whom he had never dealt. The second was from Purvis, who was calling to ask a favour; the third was a golf appointment.

He laid them by his plate and stared straight in front of him, while Petty hovered about the room fussily. There was something terrifying in this experience, something inhuman. Scores of stories are told of people "foreseeing the future," but it is no more than a glimpse, a peep at one incident. But here was the case of a man seeing almost the whole of a day. Even the chattering commonplaces of Petty were familiar; he had heard them before midnight.

Breakfast over, he took his usual stroll along the Embankment with a pipe. He remembered that this part of the day was a gap. He may have dreamed it, but it would not come back to him. It was a great relief; he could read his newspaper as he walked, without the feeling that he knew already what it contained. What a blessing this was! When people want to know what is going to happen, they little know what a comfort it is to be in ignorance. At half-past nine, as usual, he returned to his chambers, and—found Elsie there. This again was totally unexpected, and it was a delightful surprise.



"The madman's arm had been struck aside, at the very instant he fired, by Elsie herself."

She had arranged to play golf with a girl in North London, and, finding herself with half an hour to spare, had very sensibly called on her young man.

"I suppose you are frightfully busy, Basil, as usual," she said, submitting to a good-morning kiss with a demureness which

never failed to charm him. "It will do you good if I waste a little of your time. You work too hard, old boy. Are there any cigarettes?"

He produced a box, and they lighted up. Elsie looked at him curiously. "You look a trifle off colour, dear. Anything wrong?"

He told her a portion of his dream, and at first she laughed. Elsie was not in the least fanciful, and looked upon dreams as "all rot."

"I admit it sounds like foolishness," he said, with a smile. "But the exasperating thing is that up to now everything has come true. The test is, will the rest of the day live up to the dream?"

The letter from Purvis made her frown slightly, and when he went on to say that Purvis was going to ask him to take over a brief in the Epsom Court, she looked at him hard.

"I can tell you all about the case," he went on. "And, unless the dream lets me down badly, it will prove to be a bit of luck for you and me."

She listened in astonishment.

"If it happens like that, it will be topping," she said slowly. "You won't be a junior long, Basil, if you make a name. But tell me the rest of the day. What happened afterwards?"

"No, I shan't tell you any more. I will write it down on paper and post it to you. You shall read it to-morrow."

He was curious to see if the after-part of the day would work out according to programme. It rested with her. She would be almost certain to call upon him on her way home. If she proposed a theatre, they would go to one. If she felt tired and wanted to go home at once, he would go down to Wimbledon with her.

But Elsie was still looking at him. Women are curiously susceptible about unknown influences, and although he smiled and imagined he was concealing his uneasiness, she seemed to be aware of it.

"Was there anything unpleasant in the dream, Basil?" she asked.

"It ended like dreams always do—in a vague something or other that isn't easy to recall," he said carelessly. "Don't let us talk about it any more. I shall—— There's a knock at the door, and it will be Purvis come to offer me his brief, Wilkins *v.* Cheshire."

"Are you sure you haven't already heard of the case?" she asked uneasily.

"Perhaps he has spoken of it, but you have forgotten."

"I haven't seen Purvis for a week or two. Yes?"

"Mr. Purvis to see you, sir," said Petty.

Elsie left him almost at once, and, just as he anticipated, Purvis had come to insist on his taking over a case. His wife was ill.

"It's as plain as a pikestaff, and won't last half an hour," said Purvis. "You'll be back in Town for luncheon."

Charteris hesitated. He hardly liked to take the brief, because he believed there was more attached to it than Purvis imagined. But when he said as much, and was able to mention the names of the parties without looking at the inscription on the brief, Purvis simply stared at him. Purvis was a downright, matter-of-fact individual, with no more imagination than a sewing-machine.

"Look here, old chap, you don't want to get these cranky ideas in your head," he said. "I'm taking the missus down to Torquay, and the brief is yours. If there's any fat hanging to it, good luck to you. But you'll find it all moonshine."

Charteris had to leave for Epsom at once, and must trust to reading the case over in the train. By sheer will-power he shut uncanny ideas out of his mind. When he entered the Court late, and apologised to the judge, exactly as he had apologised in his dream, he felt like a puppet being pulled by invisible strings.

Everything that followed was familiar, yet in the press of argument he was able to shut uneasiness out of his mind. The case was commonplace up to a point, and then a woman witness blurted out something that was unexpected. He knew her face, though he had never seen her before; he knew the sound of her voice. An argument with the judge followed, and a dull case became exciting. Wilkins, the plaintiff, was an unsavoury wretch, and Charteris had him back in the witness-box. The man was a humbug of the vilest kind, and at about three o'clock in the afternoon Charteris had won his case after a tough fight.

He had to endure congratulations—which he hardly liked, though he had fairly earned them—and by the time he reached London, the evening papers were chuckling over his retorts and cross-examination. One of them actually had a placard "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Epsom."

In vain he tried to shake off a feeling of depression ; the day was closing down upon him with relentless speed. Another hour or two, and that last scene would happen. He was already giving way to a feeling of Kismet ; it had to happen—there was no escape.

In his chambers he sat for a long time thinking it over. He might avoid it. There were fifty things he might do to escape, but he would go straight on. He would follow his fate, no matter where it led. It rested with Elsie. If she voted for a theatre, to a theatre they would go, and he would take her home as usual.

" If I am to be murdered, I'll take it like a man," he muttered. " I'll be hanged if I save my skin because I got the wind up over a dream."

Elsie came rushing in exactly as expected, with the evening paper in her hand. It was curious to watch her attitude, and she used the words he expected. " I am not a bit prouder of you, dear, than I was yesterday, but I am glad you have come into your own."

Yet she was uneasy ; he could see it in her eyes. The case had taken the turn he had predicted, and, like himself, she shrank from the feeling that they were caught up in a fate that was unavoidable.

" Look here, I won't have any moping over this business," she said. " You shall take me somewhere to dinner, and then we'll do a theatre. I must 'phone to mother, and tell her I'll be home late."

She used his telephone, while he looked over a few letters, but as soon as she had used it, she turned to him with a new alarm in her face.

" Did you expect me to propose a theatre ? " she asked.

He laughed at her. " I'm not going to say anything about it. Here is an account of the latter part of my dream, and I am going to post it now. You will receive it in the morning. I shall be ready to start in five minutes, but no more about dreams, Elsie. We will enjoy ourselves. Where would you like to go ? "

" What about the Ambassadors ? "

" Nothing I should like better," he said.

The dream had broken down, and he was absurdly relieved. But Elsie was looking at him, and, seeing the smile on his face, she may have imagined that she was unconsciously fulfilling his fate, for suddenly she altered her mind.

" I believe I would rather go to Wyndham's," she said.

From that moment his spirits rose. There is tremendous difference between certainty and uncertainty. Hitherto he had been haunted by a doubt as to how far his curious experience was reliable ; now he knew the worst. It was correct. Even Elsie's ingenious attempt to ward off Fate was useless, and he could afford to smile. Let a man know the worst, and he can harden himself to face it. There may even be a grim sort of satisfaction in doing so.

Elsie smiled at the relief in his eyes, and doubtless believed she had broken an uncanny spell. They enjoyed themselves finely at dinner, and she discussed sundry preparations for the wedding.

It was strange how heartily he could enter into it. The feeling that it was not his own wedding was with him, for he would perish that night at the hands of a lunatic, but he would not have spoilt her happiness for the world. Her eyes sparkled and her pretty face flushed with excitement even at the thought of it. He was beginning to take a purely detached view of himself and his own fate. He would put up no end of a fight to save himself presently. He had no intention of being snuffed out by a madman for nothing, but it would be useless. Ingenuity would not serve, and nothing could persuade him to run away from his fate. He would face the business as he had faced things before—in Flanders, for instance.

The evening was a happy one, and neither of them felt the presence of a cloud. During the last interval Elsie said she did not think he need take her down home, " It will do you far more good to get to bed, old boy."

" Just as you like, dear," he said, with a smile.

Once more she seemed to fancy that in saying this she was playing into the hands of Fate, for a frown appeared on his forehead. " Well, no, I think I would like you to see me home, Basil," she said. " We shall have a nice long talk in the train."

He nodded acquiescence ; the affair was in her hands.

They walked from Wimbledon Station to her father's house—which was on the Ridgeway—at a brisk pace. Elsie took his arm, and he fancied she clung a little tightly, as if she suddenly felt the return of the shadow. But he found it easy to talk

cheerfully, because he was deeply interested in what was to follow.

They parted, Elsie detaining him for a short time in talking over arrangements for to-morrow. She felt obviously nervous. Twice she held up her lips to be kissed.

"You are sure everything is quite all jolly, aren't you, old boy?" she asked.

"Rather! Good night, dear."

The door closed behind her as he reached the gate, and he set off down the hill to the station.

He was listening for the furtive step behind just as he had listened in his dream. Not yet—not just yet! It was not due for several more yards.

If he had not dreamed that dream, he would not have listened for the step; he would not have paused, perhaps, and so the catastrophe might not have happened. It was a curious psychological puzzle, and it interested him so much that he forgot to listen. Perhaps a foreknowledge of trouble only hastens it; he would have liked to discuss the point with one or two men who were interested in such things.

Ah, now!

He heard the step. Someone was running for a few yards with a shuffling uncertain run, and then pausing. He looked round, but saw no one. The figure was hiding in the shadow. A few yards further on, he looked round again, and this time he saw someone.

"Don't hide yourself," he said. "If you have anything to say, come and say it."

They were the exact words of his dream. He had not consciously chosen them; they came from his lips naturally.

The man was standing in the light of the lamp. He was scared-looking and shabby, a person to be smiled at rather than feared.

"Who the devil are you?" asked Charteris.

The man came nearer.

"Perhaps you don't know me," he muttered. "Why don't you pretend you never saw me before?"

Charteris made some reply—possibly the words of his dream—but his mind was busy. If he was to avert his fate, he must be swift.

"Who wrecked my home?" said the man hoarsely. "You . . ."

Charteris sprang forward, but the other was too quick. The revolver cracked off full in his face, as it seemed, and he fell.

* * * * *

"At last! Do you feel very weak, dear?"

Elsie was bending over him. He was lying on a stretcher in a darkish place, and, knowing that he would be perplexed, she explained quickly.

Only a few minutes had passed since the shot was fired, and he was at the police-station, where he had been examined by a doctor. There was little harm done, for the madman's arm had been struck aside, at the very instant he fired, by Elsie herself, and the wound was a trifle.

"How did you come to be there, Elsie?" he asked.

"I was frightened, old boy," she whispered. "And as we entered our gate, I saw a man lurking in the dark not far away. After you left me, I came out again and followed you."

He held her hand and looked up into her eyes gratefully.

"I am thankful to-day is finished," he said. "Are they going to take me to a hospital?"

"No jolly fear," she said. "I am going to have you under my own eye, and I've 'phoned to mother to say we are coming."

"If only my dream had told me that the day would end up like this, I wouldn't have cared twopence," he said. "But Fate itself cannot get level with a woman when she's the right sort."

CECILIA'S GHOST

By DESMOND COKE

ILLUSTRATED BY G. WELCH RIDOUT

CECILIA suddenly decided that, in spite of her name, she must write something horrible.

Of course, like every respectable unmarried girl, she had published a novel, but there was nothing very awful about that, in spite of what the critics said. It was domestic; and deep in her, Cecilia felt sure, there was something unsuspected—almost unwomanly, dark, eerie—something that could find relief only on paper.

She would surprise the people who looked upon her as a rather average woman, and upon Woman as a very ordinary thing. She would raise the lid of her soul and display to them for one second things that would send them shuddering away. Never again should anybody call her "Sis."

It was not of moral iniquity that she hankered to write. No, it was dank horror which appealed to her. She would prove that she was a woman in no earthy mould, a woman all apart. Those who had been her friends should shiver as they passed, and murmur to inquisitive companions: "Why, *she* wrote 'The Crawling Thing'! . . . Let's hurry on, or she will talk to us, and I dread meeting her weird eyes."

There! "The Crawling Thing." That was the very title she had sought so long, and now it had come to her without any effort! The gods—but no, the demons—obviously spurred her on. She hurriedly seized up a pen and wrote these three words in excited capitals:

"THE CRAWLING THING."

Then she began to think; and possibly that hurt the demons' pride, for, try as she might, nothing more would come.

A dozen times did she write the first sentence, a dozen times she crossed it out. Nothing seemed quite ghastly enough to go beneath so grim a title. "It was midnight" appeared to her the best, but she felt certain that she had read it somewhere before. All the best things, she finally decided, had been used up centuries ago. It was certainly very unfair that the early authors had started with such an advantage. Anybody could have been original in those days, when nobody had written anything. What a classic she would have become if only she had been born in the sixteenth century—or even before Edgar Allan Poe!

The sense of injustice was fatal to creation. She laid down her pen.

Then she thought of something else.

As it was something that she had done five hundred times at least before, it is surprising that she did not think of it a little earlier.

She would ask Max.

II.

"MAX," she said, as soon as he arrived, "I've never written a ghost story."

"Why should you?" he answered jauntily, as he laid down his straw hat. It is not in healthy young men to anticipate a crisis.

Cecilia was annoyed at once.

She saw now that this, of course, was just the answer he *would* make. She had been a fool to ask him. It was this horrible superiority that always made her talk of something else whenever he proposed. Simply because he had sold twenty thousand copies of a book admittedly not half so good as hers was going to be, and had two serials almost accepted!

"I'm sure I don't know why I *shouldn't*," she replied with warmth.

Max pulled his trousers up two inches at the knee and sank into an easy-chair before he nonchalantly answered.

"Simply," he said, "because no woman ever has." He ran a finger down the mauve clock of his socks.

Cecilia could not trust herself to speak at first. This 1880 tone of patronage to Woman—and from the man who wished to marry her! She sat and stared at him and thought. Her first instinct was to overwhelm him with the names of all the women who had written about ghosts; but that seemed petty, and she could not recall

any at the moment, so she took a higher line.

"When you scoff at women like that," she said coldly, "do you recollect that Grace Darling, George Eliot, Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel; that Joan of Arc, the late Mrs. Gladstone, and Elinor Glyn; that your own mother——"

"Leave her out," Max interrupted. "She's never written one. I never heard that any of the others had?"

"*Oh!*" cried Cecilia, with a pretty gesture of disdain. "And yet they say *women* can't argue! Of course you knew I wasn't talking about ghost stories just then."

Max gave no answer—probably guilt weighed him down—and presently, speaking in the tones that adults use to a forgiven child, Cecilia asked again calmly: "What do you think there is against my writing a ghost story?"

His penitence was certainly delusive. "Nothing but the fact already mentioned—women simply *can't*." And whilst she gaped at him, he crossed his legs comfortably, joined finger-tips, then started with the air of an Extension lecturer. "Women, you will find, are straitly limited to a quite narrow sort of writing. Essays, garden books, diaries, War experiences, domestic or sex novels—that is Woman's realm, and for an obvious reason. They have not been educated. Not," he added hastily, "in Greek or Latin, with this result: they lack the classic sense of *form*—that splendid simplicity which drives through from line one on to Finis, leaving out the inessentials. A woman's mind is different. What does she do if she sits down to write? She just starts anyhow, and sees what happens."

"When I sit down to write," Cecilia said with dignity, "I sit down and write."

"An excellent idea," Max answered suavely, "but it won't do with ghosts. You must sit down and *think*. Days must pass before you touch a pen. And why? Because, unless each step is logical, the whole thing goes to pot. And that is why no woman ever has written, or will, a really good ghost story."

Cecilia suddenly got up. He also rose, but she was at the door by then.

"Good-bye," she said, turning there. "I'm afraid I can't give you tea. Will you let yourself out? I'm in the mood to work, and everything must yield to that. I've quite decided to write a ghost story."

III.

MAX, for a man, was tactful.

He never said a word about the tale. He did not ask how it was getting on. He waited.

And presently came his reward.

"Max," asked Cecilia thoughtfully, some four days later, when he had paid his daily call, "how is the best way to begin ghost stories?" She spoke in quite an abstract manner.

"Well," he replied, no less impersonal, without a reference to any quarrel, "there are a dozen ways. Some begin at the last chapter. Many don't begin at all," he added hopefully.

"I could go on," she said, with a certain pathos. "I'm full of ghosts and things, all waiting to come out on paper, but it is just beginning. Max," she cried, and he had never seen her so appealing, so fragile, so delightful, "won't you write me just Chapter One, and tell nobody, and then I can go on?"

He got up and stood over her. "Wouldn't I do anything in all the world for you?" he asked. And then he ventured, ever so timidly: "Sis!" It sounded much more daring than "Cecilia."

She writhed. "I only want one chapter," she said lightly, to hide her emotion. "Just to get me going. When can you deliver it?"

"What is the rate of remuneration?" he inquired.

"Oh, don't be tiresome, Max!" was her peevish retort.

He could not have believed that what had seemed life's golden moment could turn so rapidly to dross.

IV.

MAX cleared his throat and said imposingly—

"THE CRAWLING THING.

FIRST CHAPTER."

"Oh, I think 'First Chapter' sounds horrid!" remarked Cecilia critically. "I like to hear it called 'Chap. One.'"

Max was firm at the start. "Of course," he said, "this is a mere shell. You can do what you like with it. This gets the creeps started. That and the title will be quite enough. The whole thing is a formula. By the way, I'm calling myself May."

"But why?" Cecilia asked.

Max snorted. "It's no use asking why. I am. I've got to be somebody, and stories like this are always in the first person, and I *must* be a girl."

"Oh, yes," said Cecilia. "Well, go on."

"First Chapter," doggedly repeated Max, and then—

"THE HOUSE ON THE HILL.

"Wanted, young couple to rent half of a large old country house (furnished).—Apply, Rus, Box 116A. . . ."

Cecilia gave a little sigh. "*Oh!*" she said. "And I wanted it to start with something creepy! I could have written an advertisement myself."

"It *is* creepy," sternly answered Max. "The readers all know something terrible is due to happen, directly they read this. That is the way every mystery story ever written has begun."

"Couldn't it be midnight, Max?" Cecilia murmured in the tones that had so often brought victory before.

But this time Max was adamant. "No, it could not," he said. "They wouldn't read advertisements at midnight. It's not ever done. And I shan't read the thing at all unless you promise not to say a word."

"I may at the end?" she asked.

"Yes, at the end," he answered with emphasis.

Thus crushed, Cecilia nestled in the sofa cushions and elaborately laid a finger on her laughing lips. Max ignored this little pantomime, and, having read the disputed advertisement again, went on—

"I repeated the words to myself for the five hundredth time, with ever-growing sense of dread.

"Yesterday they had seemed full of promise. I had pictured my brother, once dragged away from his beloved London, rapidly becoming the merry-hearted boy who had been my child-playmate, instead of the silent, gloomy man, obsessed by his writing, that he had recently become. To-day the same words came back to me with a note of doom, as something threatening to wreck my life.

"I could not say exactly what it was that had produced this change. Perhaps it was the long, slow drive to our new home; perhaps the bitter cold; perhaps my brother's silence.

"'Denzil,' I almost startled myself by asking suddenly, talking loud to overcome the rattling of our ancient carriage, 'you've never told me anything really about the house. I hope our half is separate?'

"'It's a quaint old rambling place,' he answered, 'built so that our wing only touches the main building at one point. I suppose there'd be a locked door there. In our garden you won't know there *is* another house, and naturally we each have our front door.'

"'And the landlord? Is he—what is he like, Denzil?'

"'Haslam? Oh, I don't know,' he answered. 'Forty or so, I suppose. Not a bad fellow, I dare say. Didn't altogether like his looks. But I expect he'll leave us decently alone. You'll see.'

"He sank once more to silence, in a way that made it clear he did not want to talk.

"The jolting carriage rattled on, and I was left no whit more at ease.

"Vague terrors, shapeless premonitions, surged across my mind. In vain I tried to laugh at them, in vain I tried to reason. A hideous fear gripped hold of me. The horse's slow feet seemed to hammer out a song of doom.

"'Denzil,' I said almost faintly, 'Denzil, I'm so cold!'

"He did not answer.

"He was staring past me with his eyes wide open, eyes clearly unseeing, drawn as by a spell.

"'Denzil, Denzil!' I cried in horror.

"And still he stared coldly, blankly, through me with fixed eyes.

"The sun, so lately in its bed-time glory, peeping rosily from curtains of a splendid yellow, now flung a last despairing beam on Denzil's clear-cut face, giving to it the deadly colour of a mummy.

"I laid a shaking hand upon his knee. 'Don't look like that!' I cried. 'You frighten me.'

"He seemed to come back to himself with a jar. His eyes shrank suddenly.

"'What is it now?' he asked impatiently. Then, as his eyes seemed to regain their faculty of vision: 'Why, here we are! That's Hagstomb.' He pointed to the spot where his gaze had been held . . .

"I did not look at once. 'Hagstomb!' I repeated. 'Hagstomb? Our house isn't called Hagstomb?'

"'Yes,' he said, with angry cheeriness. 'But I meant not to tell you. You've such odd ideas. Someone was buried there. We easily can alter it. Now have a look at our new home.'

"Already sick with an unreasoning fear, I looked around.

"High on a bleak hill it stood, slate-grey in the sunset's monotone, illimitably drear. The dropping sun pierced for one moment its blackened hangings with a blood-red ray, which caught the windows of the gloomy,

shapeless pile. From pane to pane the flare ran fitfully.

"'Looks just as though it was on fire already!' Denzil laughed.

"But to my eyes it spoke of infernal revelry and evil chance.

"I placed a hot, trembling hand on Denzil's wrist.

"He turned slow eyes upon me.

"I felt tears trickling down my face.

"'Why, little girl——' he said with sudden tenderness.

"'Oh, Denzil, I can't—I can't!' I sobbed, and fell shuddering across his knees."

V.

"WHY did she do *that?*" Cecilia asked.

"My dear girl——" he began, and she was too enthralled for protest. "If you ask that, you have spoilt the story. It was the horror of it—don't you see? Of course I don't know—this is all I'm writing"—he spoke firmly—"but I imagine it will turn out to have something to do with the Crawling Thing."

"Oh!" cried Cecilia in surprise. "I thought you said that she was cold? I wondered why she didn't put a wrap on."

Max flung the manuscript upon the carpet. He had not troubled much about the chapter, but he thought it deserved better than this. "If she'd done that," he bellowed, "she would have wrecked the chapter and taken all the mystery away. But that's just like a woman. I told you so. You've too much common-sense for ghosts. 'She wouldn't have done that,' you say, and really we all know she wouldn't. But that's no use with a spook story. Well, it's all done," he went on, with relief, "so now we'll just pretend she *did* put on her wrap, and then we'll burn the rotten chapter."

"Oh, don't be cross and horrible," Cecilia said, with a reproachful gentleness. "You've done Chap. One so *beau*tifully. It's only I don't see quite where the Crawling Thing comes in. Max"—and her tones were almost sugary—"if you did just a *leetle* more——"

"No," answered Max, with just that dubious quaver which would save his manly dignity when he had given in—the quaver invented by Adam when offered the apple, and used by his descendants ever since.

"Oh, yes, Max!" she replied, and took his arm. He quivered with delight. "You do it so well! I should only spoil your chapter. I'll take it up when you've got in your stride."

"No," came the answer. His arm that she pressed was all tense and hard.

"I don't believe you can," she whispered. It would have been a hiss if it had held an "s."

Man is so simple always—when he has a woman on his arm. That evening Max worked upon "The Crawling Thing" till midnight.

VI.

MAX, with ill-hidden pride, unrolled a solid bundle of MS. and settled down to read. *She* should see now whether he could!

"THE CRAWLING THING.

"SECOND CHAPTER.

"I GO ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

"My room that night was full of presences.

"Try as I might to go to sleep, always, as I shut my eyes, I felt—something behind me.

"I lit my candle. I tried to laugh my fears away. A grown woman—afraid of the dark!

"But it was all of no avail.

"Gradually, little by little, a sound from the actual world began to force itself upon me. At first I affected not to hear it; I tried to deceive myself. But it insisted, and slowly I began to analyse it, despite myself.

"What was the sound, and whence? At first it seemed to come from the next room, this regular soughing as of a distant engine, then from my very room, and then, for certain, from without the door. It was in the passage!

"But what? This question also found its answer slowly; but when the truth came to me, it came, like all awful truths, without debate. There was no doubt. The sound was of deep breathing, so deep as to seem like that of somebody in effort or agony.

"The terror of that discovery I think I shall never forget. For some moments I could scarcely think. Then into my mind, full with the terror of this room, yet faced with that greater dread outside, there came an instinct that is still a puzzle to me.

"I hurried on a dressing-gown, took my candle, and unlocked the door. With strange calmness I turned the light now this way, now that, along the corridor, peering here and there. There was nothing to be seen.

"Then, with no more time for thought, I hastened aimlessly along the dim corridor, shielding the uncertain flame with a protecting hand.

"It came upon me gradually that I was being drawn to a single spot. I walked aimlessly, unguided by my will, moved rather than moving, and yet I knew where I was going. At the end of this wing of the house—for which we had no use—there was a room empty but for half a dozen boxes. I halted suddenly beside the door.

"It was now, when I ceased to move, and realised how far I had travelled from my room, that fear first came upon me. I began to fancy endless horrors that might front my eyes on entry; I pictured, above all, someone huddled in a corner, with a pistol trained upon the door. So terrifying were my thoughts—and so strong still my impulse to go inside the room—that of a sudden, to avoid them, I turned the handle. It was hideously dark within—so much I could tell as I stood, with the door open but a little, and listened for a sound or any sign of human presence.

"Everything was silent, and presently, still haunted by my thoughts, I cried, 'Is anyone here?' and then started at the sound of my thin, frightened voice.

"Aghast at my own boldness, I thrust the door still further open and stood on the threshold, gazing in.

"And then I almost laughed at my mad fears.

"For the room was empty! Our travelling trunks had been set, as I had ordered,



"'You mean to tell me,' she said angrily, 'you put it down there and don't know yourself? I call that really mean.' 'But I *do* know,' Max protested."

on the floor, but so scattered that I could see that nothing lurked behind them; a spring bed, without a mattress, stood along one wall; but for the rest there was—nothing!

"Now at last, reassured despite myself, I turned to go. I would deceive myself into the belief that I had fancied everything, that this was just an empty box-room; above all, I would leave this room.

"Then a thing happened of which even now I cannot bear to think. When I turned round, the door had swung to, not so as to be absolutely closed, but so as to leave a gap of possibly an inch between it and the framework. I laid hold of the handle and, in my longing to escape, gave it a strong pull towards me.

"The door refused to move! It was not that it had jammed. There was no unyielding fixity about it, but rather a force which, though averagely steady, now gave, now gained a little—brute force resistlessly, unceasingly opposing me. Now the door was open close upon two inches, now it swung back until almost shut. The explanation left no place for doubt.

"The door was being held by somebody—Something—against me!

"At that awful thought a spasmodic shudder passed along my body, and I let go my hold upon the handle. Slowly and noiselessly, as if controlled by some uniform and impassive force, the door was closed, and, urged by an instinct of defence, I turned the key.

"Better a millionfold to be in the room, explored in every corner, than in the passage with all its unknown horrors!

"But as I stood in trembling near the centre of that empty room, I felt that, turn where I might, there was always—I will not say someone, but some presence behind me.

"In terror, I fell on my knees.

"And at that, from near behind me, came a low, full laugh of pity and derision.

"In an instant my hands fell from my face. I sprang up and stood erect, listening with every nerve.

"Again it came—less loud this time, more as of one who chuckles at the memory of a glorious jest.

"I forced myself to turn. I moved slowly round, dreading each moment to meet the face of the intruder. But there was no one there.

"Then panic seized me. I tottered, rather than ran, to the wall furthest from the awful sound, and cowered helplessly against the corner. It was some comfort to feel the solid brick behind my back.

"Standing thus, I could be certain. The room was absolutely empty. There were still the scattered trunks, still the empty bed, still the depressing wall-paper of slate and blue. What more prosaic room could be imagined? And yet . . .

"Was I mad? Was Denzil right?

"And as I doubted, thoughts flashing at wild speed across my fevered brain, the laugh rang out again, the big laugh of strong Cruelty amused at cringing Terror, such as one would fancy the exultation of a fiend in hell."

* * * * *

Max's voice died down.

"Is that all?" asked Cecilia, uncurling herself rather timidly.

"All of that chapter," Max answered rather grandly. She had not believed he *could* go on!

Cecilia sat silent for a moment. "You never explain," she said presently. "Who held the door? Who laughed? And *was* it a cat breathing?"

"A cat!" Max answered scornfully. "Of course it wasn't. Nor, may I add, was it a mouse."

"Well, what was it, then?"

He cleared his throat and answered rather pompously: "My dear Cecilia, those things cannot be explained—just yet. That's all left for the last chapter. Nobody must know till then."

Cecilia put on her most pleading air and asked in studiously childish tones: "Not even me?"

"Why, *you're* writing it," Max answered coldly.

"So I am," she sighed.

VII.

"Yes," said Cecilia presently, with quite an air of finality. "But when do you start the love interest?"

He put down the manuscript a little heavily. "The love interest?" he asked in dazed tones, blinking.

"May and Mr. Haslam," she said quite simply.

"Oh, yes," he replied, with desolating irony, "that will be Chap. IV. Then in Chap. V. we'll please women readers by making Denzil fall in love with a housekeeper dressed all in black. And before the end we'll find a lover for the Crawling Thing."

"Oh, that'll be splendid!" cried this

innocent Cecilia, clapping her hands girlishly. "I was afraid that you were going to be stuffy. But *need* the housekeeper be all in black? She might be wearing——"

"I think," said Max, in iron tones of self-restraint, "I'd better leave all the love interest part for you! You'll do it ever so much better. I'm not a success ever as a lover." He looked up, but she had looked down. "Besides, *I* think it'll spoil the story. It's just what I said women always did. But of course *you*'ll know what the housekeeper has got to wear."

VIII.

"Well, look here," said Max, as though to end an argument that had been over-long, "I really *can't* go on. I've done three chapters now, and I meant only to do one. I've got it started now, and everybody knows how it goes on. But, if you like, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll make a list of chapter headings as a guide for you."

"Oh, yes!" cried Cecilia. "Bring it round after tea?"

Max began to look on the ghost story with more favour. Cecilia usually would not let him call more than once every day, which he considered a niggardly ration for these times of Peace. Punctually at quarter to five he came into her little drawing-room.

"Have you got it?" she asked keenly.

He at once unrolled it. These things are best over. Once he had read the list, they could resume their nice old talks, such as they had before she got this preposterous idea.

"Listen," he said.

"Chapter III. — What Lay Beneath the Sheet.
Chapter IV. — I Make a Discovery.
Chapter V. — The Tomb Beneath the Yews.
Chapter VI. — Denzil Beards the Landlord.
Chapter VII. — A Woman in Black.
Chapter VIII. — The Face at the Window.
Chapter IX. — In the Empty Room.
Chapter X. — A Night of Terror.
Chapter XI. — Old Toby Talks.
Chapter XII. — We Drive Out."

"Splendid!" she exclaimed, to his relief. "So now I can get on. Only"—and then she hesitated—"I don't think I quite see Chap. IV. What *did* lay—no, lie beneath the sheet?"

Max laughed. "Ask me another! I was never any good at riddles."

"You mean to tell me," she said angrily, "you put it down there and don't know yourself? I call that really mean."

"But I *do* know," Max protested. Without care, he could see his pleasant afternoon all spoilt.

"Then what *did?*" she asked like a child. "I don't believe you know."

He had his head against a wall. "I'll write Chap. IV., then," he said hurriedly.

"Max, you dear!" she exclaimed. It was the first time ever.

Max certainly believed in ghosts.

IX.

"And this really *is* the last," said Max firmly, whereon he began to read:

"Chapter the Third

—er—Chap. Three.

"What lay beneath the sheet.

"What was that?

"I woke up with the distinct impression of someone fumbling at the door. A tap—the handle turned.

"I sat in terror, staring out.

"'May?' whispered a voice, and I could almost have laughed in my relief.

"It was Denzil!

"I leapt from my bed and in mad haste turned the key. It was wonderful to have company, to feel someone near during the long night hours in this awful house.

"But Denzil came in strangely grave and white. 'I say, old girl,' he whispered, 'I came to tell you that there is someone in the house. I heard footsteps, real footsteps'—he smiled at me—'in the corridor. I came to warn you not to be frightened if you heard me running about.' I noticed for the first time that he held a revolver in his hand. I had never known that he possessed it. He gently took my arms from around him, and made as if to go towards the door. The motion filled me with a fresh alarm.

"'You won't leave me?' I asked. 'You won't go?'

"'Don't be afraid!' was his answer. 'Nothing will happen to you, old girl. Lock the door till I come back.'

"'But, Denzil . . .' I put my arms around him, as if to keep him, but he shook himself free.

"'You don't suppose, May,' he said, more in his usual manner, 'that we can lock ourselves up while burglars ransack Hagstomb!'

"'They're not burglars,' I said in a low voice.

"'Then what are they?' asked Denzil fiercely, and to that I had no answer. As I stood for a moment wondering, I saw him, as in a dream, move from me, go out, and close the door. No notion of stopping him occurred to me. I stood pensive, motionless, for, I suppose, some thirty seconds. Then I realised suddenly that he had gone, to leave me in darkness once again. I flung open the door and gazed along the corridor. Everything was dark and silent. Here and there a thin streak of moonlight filtered obliquely through the narrow windows, and in the gloom I thought I could see cloaked figures lurking, creeping softly nearer. With a shudder, I hurried back into my room and quickly turned the key. I stood trembling with cold and fear, clad only in my nightdress, my hand upon the key, listening for sounds of Denzil.

"And as I stood there, I felt from behind me that same feeling—which I have tried to describe—of some presence in the room. I longed to turn, and yet I feared to turn. I feared everything.

"I must find Denzil. Forgetting all else, intent only on that, I passed swiftly out into the passage. There was no sound anywhere. I walked a few paces with caution—for it was darker here—and then I halted.

"'Denzil!' I cried. The echoes died away, leaving me startled at the hollow sound that came from my dry throat.

"And now I hesitated which way I should turn. So far as common-sense decided, there could be but little doubt. Denzil, having found nobody in our corridor, would either go down to the day-rooms or up into the servants' attic; he would not expect to find burglars in the empty rooms. All that occurred to me. I knew that it was useless for me to go along the box-room passage, and yet I went—went to the scene of my horror on that hideous night when I had heard the laugh inside the empty room! . . . A few seconds more, and I stood grasping the door-handle of that room. Even then the dread of the place could not avail against its fascination. I listened, but there was no sound inside the room. The moon struck full on this side of the house, and through the half-open door I could see, from where I stood, the wall suffused with a dim glow of light. Everything seemed silent, everything peaceful. And yet I feared to enter. Presently, struck with a thought, I tiptoed lightly to the threshold and peered timidly through the crack between the massive hinges of the door. There, too, was nothing, and again I saw only the pale light glinting on the walls. But even as I assured myself of this, I seemed to feel someone behind me, and swung quickly round, my heart thumping in my body. And again there was nobody, nothing! I resolved to stay thus, a prey to my imaginings, no longer—I would enter.

"At that I flung the door wide open, and then leapt back, finding it comfortable to have the wall behind me. But again no sound came from within, and through the wider opening I could see almost half the room. There were the empty boxes, now piled against a corner, and there was the empty——

"But, as I looked again, I realised that there was something on the bed—the bed that had been empty. Nothing of ours—and yet what could it be? Should I find here, in this bundle covered by a sheet, the secret of the midnight wanderings in Hagstomb? Oh, how I longed for Denzil! I feared to lift the sheet. I made a step towards it, but then drew back, overcome by a strange sickness. I *would* fetch Denzil!

"Yet, when I had my hand upon the door, I turned, as though my eyes were drawn, and looked long at the shapeless heap that rose upon the bed. It was so still, so simple—a mere sheet that covered—what? Why should I not look and know? I stepped forward slowly, hesitating, curiosity battling with fear, attraction with repugnance. Only when I was within a foot of the bedside did I start back, as if by instinct. Then, fearing that panic would once more drive me back, I laid hold of the covering and drew it sharply off. Of what met my eyes I can even now scarce bear to write.

"Terribly cramped in his position, pale in the moonlight, a strange man was staring up at me!

"Thoughts dashed across my mind. Why had I not known? A trap, this formless mass beneath the sheet, to draw me near my murderer, that he might leap upon me! Instinctively I started back.

"Then the absence of what I feared brought a worse terror to me. I stared, my blood chilling, at his mouth—his mouth fixed in a drawn smile, half jeer, half agony. Why did he not move? Why stare up at me with those cold eyes?

"My gaze fixed upon them, I seemed to feel myself led, as by an unseen cord, until, craning forward, moving step by step in dread, I found my face within an inch of his. Now I could have no doubt.

"The man was dead!

"Suddenly my strange state broke. I found myself staring into, all but touching, the fixed eyes of the dead man. It was the first time that I had looked on death, and the sight was terrible beyond description. All the blood in my veins rushed up to my head, a lump rose in my throat, a dizzy tingling passed along my limbs.

"I groped blindly for support, and my hand found rest on something strangely stiff and chill. For one moment it steadied me, then I felt my prop yielding, and as I realised that I had grasped the dead's man's hand, I saw his grey-white face lurch tremulously forward at me.

"There was a burst of sound, the whole wall, bed, face, everything shot up, and the last that I remember is my own shriek echoing in my ears."

X.

"So now," Max cried triumphantly, "you can go on!"

Cecilia snorted. "I don't see that at all. I think Chap. II. would have been easier to follow up. Real ghosts never die. What can I do now?"

"Do?" Max repeated. "Why, what's always done—go on piling horrors up, and then explain. You said that you were full of shiverdom and ghostery! Well, then, here's your chance. Could you have a better?"

Cecilia suddenly began to weep—the sort of discreet, decorative tears a woman weeps when she is comfortably in sight of the man who loves her.

Instantly Max was by her side, longing to put arms of consolation round her.

"Why, what's up?" he asked, instead. His hands hung limply by his side. He looked as big an ass as any man looks on a like occasion.

"I believe you've made it hard on purpose," sobbed Cecilia, wounded in her pride. And then, as always, the real complaint came out: "I don't see how you *can* 'explain' a corpse!"

"Is there any need?" he asked gravely. "Let's see if we can't find some other end for it."

Something in his manner—like that with which the mother tries to hearten a child crying about nothing—shamed her. She dabbed her eyes with a small handkerchief.

"I'm sorry," she said. "Don't think me a fool, Max. I'm never like this. I'm not sure—perhaps writing this awful story has upset my nerves."

He was still serious. "*Need* you finish it?" he asked. And then, with just a flicker of his mouth: "Why not stop writing and be just a woman? It's a mistake for both husband and wife to write."

She gaped at him. "Husband and wife?"

"Why not?" he asked. "You and me!"

Then she smiled, and it was like the sunshine after a spring shower. "Max," she said, "how silly you are! Haven't I said fifty times that I don't mean to marry you? I am an artist, not a woman. Besides, we're ever too much splendid pals. I'm far too fond of you, and I don't mean to spoil it."

"What *do* you mean to do, then?" asked Max casually, as though all this was mere nothing to him. "About this corpse, that is, and the laugh, and what held the door?"

She looked grave. She thought. He simply dared not interrupt, and presently her face lit up.

"Max," she said, like one inspired, "could we simply say no more about all that, and end with a marriage?"

"Exactly what I just proposed!" he cried. And then, in the excitement of the moment, he took her in his arms and kissed her.

He never knew how he had dared to do it, and she was always quite uncertain why she laughed so happily and felt, after long wandering, at home.

"I think," she murmured, as if in self-excuse, "perhaps I am a woman, after all, and I've been *less* fond of you since we began 'The Crawling Thing.'"

* * * * *

When Max got back to his flat, the first thing that he did was to unroll his own manuscript and kiss it sentimentally with something very near to passion.

Then a happy thought occurred to him.

He would please her by finishing the yarn. He would explain everything—even the dead ghost. He felt omnipotent, enormous.

Poor little girl, *she'd* never write a word of it. She couldn't finish it, he knew.

But when he flattened out the page, he found that, unseen by him, she *had*, after all. She had written in decisively large letters, beyond all hope of contradiction—

FINIS.

THE SWIMMING BATH

By B. A. CLARKE

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

AT half-past eight one morning in December, Tom Roydon, the custodian of the Inveraray (Alberta) swimming-bath, was seated Turk-wise upon the diving-board, eating the last of his breakfast sandwiches. Purring as of a conciliated cat carried assurance that all was well with his boilers. And the feline complacence was not becoming boisterous, he decided, after listening for a minute anxiously. No, the noise had not increased, thank goodness! Tom had come to know the moods of his oft-patched machinery, as a mother those of a fractious child. It was a wonderful swimming-bath—one hopes unique.

And yet to its construction had been given enthusiasm and the perfect theory. The physics master of the High School, with the help of a hundred tool-accustomed pupils, built it from plans and directions given in that splendid monthly *How to Make Things*. The water-heating and the steam-heating apparatus for the building itself were bought from a derelict hydropathic establishment at New Westminster.

The opening—a gala day for Inveraray—was marred by an explosion that hurled the mayor from his inaugural speech into the water, where he ran some danger of being carried away through the gaping fissures that were opening in the cement bottom. When fished out and dried, he closed the bath until further orders. Brandon Sheldon, a "gents' outfitter," bought it for a song. When the mayor sought re-election, Mr. Sheldon tried to make the reopening of the bath an issue, but no one supported him. Year after year he persisted, and at last found a candidate weak-minded enough to make it a plank of his platform. His election, which was unexpected, gave the bath-owner a free hand.

Brandon Sheldon stood to do very well by his venture, but he was of the breed that takes no pleasure in success that others share. He hated to think that even an *employé* might profit. Whom to make bath custodian was his problem. He wanted Western resourcefulness at tenderfoot wages. He found this improbable combination in Tom Roydon, a young Englishman of good family with a passion for mechanics. Moreover, he was quite a good swimmer. Sheldon had not thought of this qualification, but obviously it was necessary. Tom jumped at Sheldon's offer of seventy per, but it was not long before he realised that he could not live upon it. Facing the situation, he hit upon a means of increasing his earnings that proved so successful that his employer wished to share them. The bath was well attended by girls. Tom announced for a fairly distant date a swimming gala in fancy dress, and allotted *rôles* to girls who could not swim. Without one exception, they accepted them, and became his pupils. Tom conferred upon himself the title of professor — professor of natation — and Inveraray fell for it. Warned by his experience, he did not make the mistake of putting his charges too low.

When Brandon Sheldon demanded half these tuition fees, Tom answered him in two words, "Nothing doing," and the gents' furnisher realised that the young Englishman with the idiom had adopted the spirit of the West. But he could not quarrel with Tom, because it was only among professors of natation one could hope to find his successor at seventy per.

Tom had just taken the last bite of his sandwich, when the doors swung open and there entered a well-developed girl, dark, but with the dazzling complexion of a blonde. In spite of this and very regular features, a certain hardness of expression made him hesitate to pronounce her beautiful.

"The bath does not open until eleven," Tom said politely, although with his mouth full.

"My father owns the bath." (So this was Irene Sheldon, whose successes at Toronto University had been proclaimed in *The Inverarian*.) "He said I could bathe at any time, so I don't want your dictation."

"Shall I fetch you some towels?" asked Tom.

"If you please."

But going downstairs to get them, he heard a note amid the symphony of the pipes that put towels out of his thoughts. There was only one way to prevent an explosion—to turn out the furnace.

He had just accomplished this, when the girl's white face appeared round the doorway.

"Mr. Roydon, the water level has sunk a brick and a half."

Followed by her, he rushed along a dark passage, the left-hand wall of which was the bulging side of the swimming-bath. At intervals stood heaps of cement, stored there for just such emergencies, and flat pieces of wood like palettes. Towards the deeper end they came upon a hole through which water gushed as from a fire-hose. Upon one of the palettes Tom made an enormous cement plaster, which he applied to the hole, and then showed the girl how to hold it in place against the pressure of the water.

"Yes, yes," she gasped, "I can hold it down; you take the other."

At the second leak was a waterfall. Alone Tom could not stop it.

"Leave your plaster, Miss Sheldon, and help here!" he screamed. "Come, quick!"

She rushed to him.

The water was half-way up to their knees before the great leak was stopped. Returning to the first, they found that while the rent had widened in their absence, it had not become so bad as the other had been, and in ten minutes it was patched.

Irene put her hands on her knees and laughed like a child.

"Good girl," said Tom, patting her wet cheeks. With her saturated garments clinging around her, her hair down and in wet masses around her face, she looked absurdly juvenile and jolly.

"You must wear your bathing suit while your clothes dry in the furnace-room; the pipes are still hot enough for that. You won't be able to bathe to-day, because I must run the water off at once and mend the bottom more professionally. These external plasters are all right for everyday leaks, but to-day's were no joke."

"How many years have we known each other?" said Irene, when leaving. "I am sorry I can't ask you to the house. Popper is frightfully mad with you; but he is big enough to fight his own battles, and there is no reason why we should not be friends. Good-bye."

A dazzling smile, a wave of a white hand, and she was gone, leaving Tom to grovelling self-abasement for ever questioning her good looks. Of course she was beautiful.

Irene became an *habituée* of the bath, arriving an hour before it was open to the public, perhaps from a wish to display her superiority to regulations, but possibly for another reason. Tom persuaded himself it was for the other reason. Certainly they were close friends.

"Popper is trying to put one over you," she said one morning. "I expect he will be along soon to attempt it."

Mr. Sheldon arrived just as Irene was leaving.

"Come round to my store at one, Mr. Roydon. I wish you to meet a friend of mine from Edmonton, and we can go on to the Argyll for lunch."

Behind her father's back Irene was making a *moue* at Tom, signifying that the process of putting one over him was in progress.

"I daren't leave the building, Mr. Sheldon, while the furnace is alight. After starting it in the morning, I take all my meals on the premises."

"Too bad, too bad. We must not keep you to it so closely as that. I will send down a capable man to relieve you. One o'clock, remember. Come along, Irene."

The clue to all which is this: An old professional swimmer, a newly-arrived immigrant who combined the accent of East Ham with the idiom of the prairie (acquired *en route* from a book of advice to Canadian settlers) arriving in Alberta, and hearing of the Inveraray swimming-bath, had applied for Tom's position. There was no questioning his swimming, and he was willing to work for seventy per and half the tuition fees. When Brandon Sheldon raised the question of pipes and boilers, the applicant, whose name was Pelham Plug, replied in a large way—

"Boss, leave *all* that to me."

But Mr. Sheldon had to be satisfied upon this point before breaking with Tom. What availed it if Mr. Plug, as he claimed, had Tom tied to a post for speed swimming if he lacked the younger man's ability to jolly refractory boilers into good temper, and to keep overwrought pipes from going up in the air? No, Mr. Plug must be tested. And now you know why Tom was invited to lunch.

About noon a stocky, red-faced man

entered and aggressively hailed Tom, who, with pole and line, was playing one of Inveraray's fairest daughters.

"Say, where is the guy who calls himself professor of natation?"

Tom dropped his pole. (His pupil was retrieved by a passing swimmer, so we may forget her as completely as Tom did.)

"I am Professor Roydon, and I must trouble you to address me respectfully."

"All right, Prof. The boss sent me up to let you out for lunch. Where are the boilers?"

"I'll show you round soon, when we close for the morning."

The last bathers had gone when Mr. Plug emerged from a dressing-box in a costume that consisted principally of medals, in which garb he made the tour of the premises, regarding with a troubled eye the steam heating, of which he understood nothing.

"Now, Prof," he said, as they emerged from the basement, "I will show you what real swimming is."

He turned a back somersault into the water, and rushed up and down the bath like a demented torpedo-boat. A tidal wave accompanied him.

"With a few lessons you could better that," said Tom airily, drawing on his overcoat. Before leaving the building he returned to the engine-room, and *may* have started the trouble that arose so soon after his departure.

Returning an hour and a half later in company with his employer and the friend from Edmonton who wished to see Inveraray's famous bath, Tom pointed out a fixed window, the only architectural feature of the east side. Glass was falling from it, and this was followed by Pelham Plug. He dropped ten feet, and then, pale of face, but brick-red of limb, rushed madly townwards, the medals upon his chest tinkling like sleigh-bells.

"I suppose, not being accustomed to Yale locks, he did not know how to let himself out," said Tom, before rushing off to stop the mischief.

"Mr. Plug has let himself out all right, all right," said Mr. Sheldon bitterly.

"That is an invaluable young man," said the stranger, when Tom had gone. "You simply could not replace him."

The gents' furnisher groaned.

A surprising sequel to this episode was Mr. Plug's affection for Tom, and his care to preserve the young man's reputation. He visited the bath twice a day, but in the afternoon, when it was crowded, contented himself with a Dover-to-Calais breast-stroke, reserving his speed displays for the morning sessions, when only Tom and Irene were present. His excuse at first for arriving before the bath was open was the necessity for consulting Miss Sheldon upon some difficulty in connection with his new calling. He had accepted the post of second cook at the Grand Central Hotel, and was learning his art, as he went along, with the assistance of a "Mrs. Beeton's Household Management," elucidated, where he pretended it needed elucidation, by Irene.

The routine of his visits did not vary. After changing into his scanty garments, he indulged in ten minutes' hurricane swimming, in which his object seemed to be to make all the water in the bath accompany him. Following this came prolonged periods of rest and recuperation below the water. When he came to the surface, it seemed to be more for information than for air.

"It says, 'Take a tablespoonful of finely-chopped shallot.' What is shallot, Miss Sheldon?"

"Search me," replied the girl.

He sank back into the depths.

Just as Tom was contemplating dragging for him, he reappeared.

"What is pounded mace?"

Irene could answer this; but she found conversation with this amphibian truth-seeker disconcerting. Amphibian is an understatement; there were suggestions that Mr. Plug's development would be in the direction of losing connection with the land. Already he had the outward movements that accompany underwater respiration. To solace himself in his long periods of submersion for the cessation of breathing, he imitated the motions of fishes, and the habit had become automatic, the symptoms being exaggerated by strong feeling of any kind, particularly by sentiment, and Pelham Plug was the arch sentimentalist. Many years before this he had been engaged to Nellie Blight, "The Human Diving-Bell," when performing with her at the halls; but parents had come between. It was dreadfully sad. Tom heard the story daily, but it always moved him. The moral was never omitted.

"Learn from my experience, Professor Roydon. When you have found your sweetheart, marry her at once, particularly if her father dislikes you."

"Why should he dislike me?" Tom inquired one morning.

"For not giving him a share of your tuition fees."

Irene was not present on this occasion. Mr. Plug was floating on his back. After making this startling remark he d sappeared.

"Well," he said, popping up unexpectedly, "what do you think of my advice?"

"Nothing doing," said Tom curtly.

"Nothing doing, dear lad!" cried the swimmer, and he was so greatly perturbed that he climbed ashore. "How can you talk in that heartless way after leading a beautiful creature on, and calling forth her tenderest emotions?" (The subaqueous breathing had become very pronounced.)

Tom replied that he hadn't called forth any feeling but that of friendship, but Plug adduced so much evidence for his contention that the young fellow was shaken. But he would not show it.

"Oh, go below, Plug; you are as full of gossip as a sewing circle."

Whenever Irene was absent, the old swimmer returned to the charge. He knew, bless you, and there were some signs there was no mistaking. And then look what Miss Sheldon's mother had said.

"What did she say?"

Plug had disappeared; a few bubbles on the surface alone indicated where. Mrs. Sheldon's remarks, if she ever made any on the subject, went unreported. But not so those of some of the other girl pupils. I am sorry to say Mr. Plug invented these. Tom suspected him at first, but the swimmer's gills were moving rapidly, his cheeks flattening and distending, and the spiky moustache rising and falling above his closed mouth, signs of such intense emotion that one could not believe him to be trifling. He wasn't; it was most serious lying. So Tom fell for it, and believed that Irene loved him; and then came the question, "Why not?" When a young man with no counter-attraction puts this question to himself concerning a fine girl he believes to be fond of him, there is but one answer. Irene, who so far had been fancy free, was frightened by the change in Tom's manner towards her, but putting to herself the same fatal question, "Why not?" reached the same conclusion.

A fortnight subsequently the sentimental Plug stumbled upon the lovers when Tom was proposing, or, rather, in the interval between declaration and acceptance.

"Confound you, Plug! What do you want?"

"Excuse my butting in, Professor, but am I premature in offering congratulations?"

"Is Plug premature, Irene?"

"Not if he thinks it a matter for congratulation."

"Indeed it is. God bless you both," he added brokenly. Visions came to him of his lost youth, of "The Human Diving-Bell," of dog-roses in a Devon lane, and of other things innocent and lovely.

"My heart goes out to you both. Have I ever told you of my own love affair?"

"Indeed you have," said Tom.

"Well, then, be warned by the tragedy of my broken life, and don't give parents a chance to separate you—elope."

"How can I break faith with all my pupils who have paid me to prepare them for the water carnival?"

"Then elope at the end of the water carnival. Make it part of the programme."

"Don't put such ideas into our heads," said the girl.

"I believe you are trying to hustle me out of Inveraray," said Tom, "in order to get my job for yourself."

"Not your job, dear lad, but your pupils. The first day proved that I could not supplant you. As long as you were willing to keep that rag-and-bone outfit of corroded iron on the planet for seventy per, and live by teaching, you had a cinch here. But if I could induce you to abandon it! And then I remembered you were teaching your boss's daughter. Here was something to work upon."

"Oh, Mr. Plug, I didn't think you could be so treacherous!" said Irene. "How did you proceed?"

"First I had to keep on the best terms with Professor Roydon, and that is why I have been so careful not to show up his natation. I had to approach the tender subject very delicately."

"You must have felt like twenty cents," said Tom hastily, "when, after all that preparation, I told you, the first time you mentioned Miss Sheldon's name, that I had fallen in love with her at first sight."

Mr. Plug's jaw dropped. Not for years had he opened his mouth except for talk or food.

"So you were only using me as a tool, Mr. Plug. I thought we were such friends."

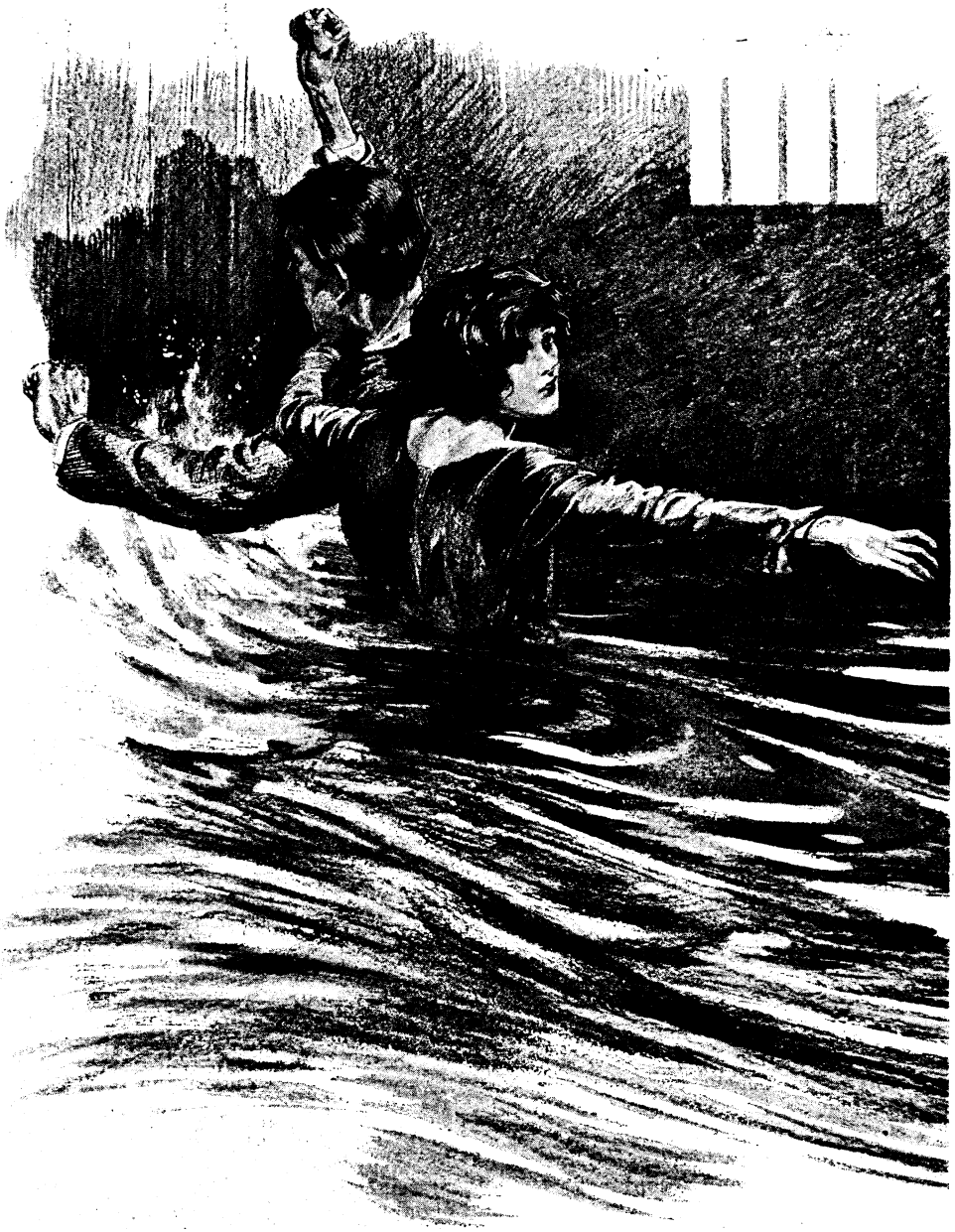
"We are, Miss Sheldon. I was working for the three—trying to get pupils for myself and married bliss for you two. I thought more of that than of getting the situation. After all, they don't pay me

badly at the Central, and I don't feed there. I think Vancouver would be a good place for you young people. Bless you."

"Get below, Plug," said Tom. "I wish to talk to my girl."

The old fellow was standing on the edge of the bath, with his back to the water. He let himself go backwards rigidly. Until he struck the water he was beaming upon his young *protégés:* his piscatorial breathing (infallible gauge of sentimentality) had never been more rapid.

The aquatic carnival, which was held on the last Saturday in February, was an overwhelming success. A dozen of the prettiest girls represented the seas and inland waterways of Canada. Irene, in light green, with an iceberg (mica) on her waterproof cap, as the Hudson Bay, looked stunning. The only man in this series was Mr. Plug, who



"Once inside the coal-cellar, which was quite a large room, they

personified the St. Lawrence. Tom had given him this part as the only way of inducing the old fellow to abandon his music-hall costume, for which Western Canada was not yet ripe. It was a sore point that he could not wear his medals. Another grievance was that *The Inverarian*, in a write-up of the gala, had said that there would be diving displays by Pelham Plug, Esq., Professor Roydon's most promising pupil. Perhaps, if Tom had understood how "edgy" the old boy was, he would not have introduced an unrehearsed effect into their stunt—taking afternoon tea together in the deep end. Upon Plug's body was supported a wicker table with all the necessary adjuncts. Tom, whose part it was to pour out, affecting to have his attention diverted from the task in hand, poured the tea on to the swimmer's chest. It was not



fought their way along the wall to the door, only to find it locked."

boiling—he had seen to that—but we agree with Mr. Plug that such horseplay is not in the best interests of natation.

The outraged professional took his revenge later. Effectually disguised as a farmer, Tom appeared in the gallery above the diving-board. Unable to find a seat, he sat on the rail, overbalanced, and fell into the water. Plug, whose allotted part was the rescue, made it the occasion for ducking Tom savagely. Irene plunged to his assistance, cuffed Plug heartily, and towed her water-logged lover to the steps. The house rose to her, seeing in the episode an elaborated allegory of the Western wheat industry, throttled by overcharges at Montreal, and rescued by the Hudson Bay route. Irene took three calls, being led on the third time by the local member, who gave an eloquent and wholly mendacious account of his own part at Ottawa in the inception of the Hudson Bay Railway.

The last item on the programme found the audience in the highest spirits. It was announced as a wordless play based upon Campbell's poem "Lord Ullin's Daughter," in the course of which Mr. Pelham Plug, pretending to drown, would make an attempt upon J. Finney's world record for submergence of four minutes twenty-nine and a quarter seconds. Time-keeper, Brandon Sheldon, Esq. This was an old ruse of Plug's. He hadn't the remotest chance of breaking this record, or going within a minute of it, but the mere fact of attempting it convinced people that he must have done as much in private, and put him in Finney's class.

A Canadian canoe, built by the physics master of the High School from designs in *What to Make*, was carried in and floated in the shallow end. Phyllis Sheldon, Irene's flapper sister, appeared disguised as an ancient boatman. Tom and Irene rushed in breathless, and in dumb show implored to be ferried down the bath. The boatman shook his head, in pantomime expressing the raging tempest. A noise of galloping horses increasing their urgency, the boatman relented, and they pushed off as Lord Ullin (Plug) in full armour (black sateen), appeared on the bank. He plunged in and swam after the boat, but his strength failed. He threw up his arms, and, with a despairing cry that sounded like "Now, then, time-keeper!" sank to the bottom.

Mr. Sheldon stood up on his seat, stop-watch in hand.

"Ten seconds," he shouted, "twenty, thirty!"

When he called "Three minutes!" the audience were on their feet with excitement, but before three ten was called, Plug appeared on the surface, took a Gargantuan breath, and sank to the bottom.

His second attempt was not so good. Of course not: the attempt upon Finney's record was the first period. The other two were merely to prevent Mr. Sheldon from interfering downstairs. But the audience did not suspect this, and when Plug sank for the third time, many hoped it was to make diving history Thirty seconds had been called, when there came a sharp crack like that made by a sheet of ice breaking, and this was followed by a fusillade. Mr. Sheldon rushed in blind panic to the exit, mindless of his daughters, of the wife of his bosom, and of Pelham Plug lying trustfully beneath the waves, for all Sheldon knew, eclipsing Finney's record in vain. But what were world records to the defaulting time-keeper compared with the preservation of his own wretched skin? The panic spread like a prairie fire.

Meanwhile Tom and the two girls had landed by the diving-board, and had descended by a step ladder to the basement. (The staircase and the furnace and boiler-room were the other end.) Here in a small room that was used for stores they found awaiting them Mr. Reynolds, the Baptist minister, who had been asked to marry Tom and Irene after the swimming festival, to enable them to catch the midnight Vancouver express. Knowing that Mr. Sheldon was on the premises, the minister had concluded, naturally enough, that the girl's parents approved.

"You haven't any time to lose," he said, showing his watch. "Where is Mr. Sheldon?"

"He can't come; he is taking the diving record. We are to start without him."

With a strange feeling of unreality, the young people found themselves making the sublime promises of the wedding service.

Mr. Reynolds interrupted the ceremony to ask Phyllis to close the door.

"I can't hear your responses through that terrible noise from above."

"What has happened?" he said, making another hiatus. "What is that wild rush above our heads?"

"Nothing," said Tom impatiently. "Plug has broken the world's record, and everyone

wants to shake hands with him. Oh, do get this ceremony done!"

Not for worlds now would he have lost Irene.

The ring was on, the register was signed, when a terrific crash and roar told the wedding-party that the right-hand side of the swimming-bath had fallen out.

"To the ladder!" shouted Tom. "Girls first! Once up the ladder we are safe. Those of us who are caught down here must escape by the coal-cellar!"

They threw open the door, and as they did so, a roaring flood like the bore on a tidal river came rushing towards them. There was no chance of using the ladder: it was swept away.

"Follow me!" screamed Tom, grabbing his wife.

Mr. Reynolds took Phyllis.

The water was above their waists, and the force was such that they had a desperate fight to make the narrow archway leading into the coal-cellar. There was no door here. Once inside the coal-cellar, which was quite a large room, they fought their way along the wall to the door, only to find it locked. They all threw themselves upon it, kicked and screamed with excitement and fury, but their efforts to break through were futile.

"It will be over in a minute, dear," said Mr. Reynolds to Phyllis, who had begun to whimper.

But Death was not to take them. There was a sound of splintering wood, the upper panels of the door were driven inwards, and through the hole came the end of a balk of timber, which was at once withdrawn. The same mighty weapon descended again, smashing lock and hinges. These gone, the door, which opened outwards, was swept away by the flood, which rolled our friends over like pebbles by an Atlantic breaker, and left them in the field outside. Tom sat up. The water, shoaling rapidly, barely covered his legs. Irene was sitting up a yard from him, her hair hanging around her face as it had that first morning when she had helped to stop the leak. Reminiscently he patted her wet cheeks.

"I loved you when I did that before," said Tom, and knew that he was speaking the truth, and this time Irene did not doubt him.

"Oh, I am so glad, Tom—so very, very glad! I could not bear to think that Plug had tricked you into loving me."

Phyllis, who had regained her feet, was laughing hysterically. Mr. Reynolds, having been bumped by the floating door, was rubbing his elbow. Plug was standing over the happy couple, club in hand, like a benevolent Magog. The bath water was still pleasantly warm, and, the Chinook being in progress, Winter was emulating Spring. At a normal February temperature of thirty below zero it would have been nip and tuck escaping death by frost.

"You are a brave man, sir," said Mr. Reynolds to their rescuer.

"I shall call you Mr. Pluck in future," said Irene.

"My house is quite close," said Mr. Reynolds. "You had better all come with me."

Fragmentarily they heard Mr. Plug's story. Coming to the surface after his final submersion, he found the seats deserted and frightened crowds struggling for the exits. And then the side of the bath fell out. Visualising the predicament of the wedding-party down below the water-level, knowing that the cellar door was likely to be locked, and certain that he could not get round in time to save them otherwise, he had broken the glass and come through the fixed window precisely as he had done the first morning when he had been left in charge. Arriving outside the cellar, he had smashed the door with a log, part of five cords dumped outside that afternoon, which Tom, fortunately, had not had time to take in. They knew the rest.

"My scheming has given you a bride," said the swimmer. "Do you think it will bring me your pupils?"

"Very doubtful if there will be any more swimming lessons in Inveraray," said Tom.

A roar which showed that the steam-heating apparatus had burst confirmed his foreboding. The sides of the building seemed to lean outwards, the roof fell in, and the walls collapsed upon the prairie. The Inveraray Swimming Bath was gone.

RED CAPS

IN winter, when the wind's up North,
And flakes begin to fall,
And merry dancers would fare forth
To hostel and to hall;
Along the rutty wagon-track,
Along the ferny knap,
The moor-mossmen link hands again,
Each crowned in crimson cap,
Five cloven like to fruit or flower;
As lengthens the hour of light,
Yet strengthens cruel-most the power
Of the frost by day and night.
The moor-mossmen join sides and then
Form fairy rings around;
And each gnome-head of man or maid
With a rasp-red cap is crowned!

Although I may not take my place
With the dancers in the hall,
But the bitter moorland blast must face,
While white flakes faster fall;
With the moss-folk small in hood and shawl
Of logan-red I'll go,
Till the sweet sap stirs the blossom of the firs
With the passing of the snow,
Till the primrose breath floats over the heath
With the ripple of the willow-wren's trill,
And the wind that opens the daisies' eyes
Shakes open the daffodil!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.



SIGNALLERS AT WORK READING AND TAKING DOWN MESSAGES.

THE GIRL GUIDES

THE ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND IDEALS OF THE MOVEMENT

Described and illustrated by

CLIVE HOLLAND

ALTHOUGH it is but little more than five years since the Girl Guides received their Charter of Incorporation, the movement had its genesis a year or two earlier as a natural outcome of the extraordinary success which attended the development of the Boy Scouts' Association, founded by Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, K.C.B. It was soon realised, however, that the movement was too close a counterpart of the boy organisation, and certain modifications were made, and then in 1915 the Girl Guides Incorporated came into being.

We are a conservative people, and we were in the midst of a great war, so it is not, perhaps, to be wondered at that great difficulties were at first encountered by the pioneers. It was constantly said that the result of girls becoming Guides would be to turn them into tomboys, teach them lots of things that they ought not to trouble about, and "spoil them as girls."

It was difficult to get the average mother and father to realise the possibilities of the movement, and the general public to take it at all seriously. The pioneer companies of Girl Guides had anything but a bed of roses; frequently they were "guyed" in the streets. But their founder was not the man to be either discouraged or beaten. He had, too, an immense asset in the character and position of many whose sympathy and aid he was able to enlist.

Thus the tender flower of the Girl Guide movement stood the chill winds of criticism and hostility, and grew apace.

There is no doubt that it was an inspiration—like its brother organisation for boys—and provided just what was needed in interest, discipline, and training for the girl children of the nation, whose need in this respect had too long been overlooked. It provided for them a new interest, and opened up the fair fields of, to them, almost romantic endeavour to play their part in nationhood. The lessons of the school were delightfully supplemented by those of the busy street and the fascinating countryside.

and during the same period were registered—

Guide Companies . . .	1,127
Brownie Packs	463
Cadet Corps	16
Lone Guide Companies . .	8
Overseas Companies . .	11

The growth of the movement is well shown by the figures for the three undermentioned years, and from 1917 each year has shown an extraordinary increase.

Total of Guides and Officers,	1917	64,988
,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1918	150,977
,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1919	231,396



LIFE IN CAMP: BACK FROM THE VILLAGE WITH THE TREK CART FULL OF PROVISIONS.

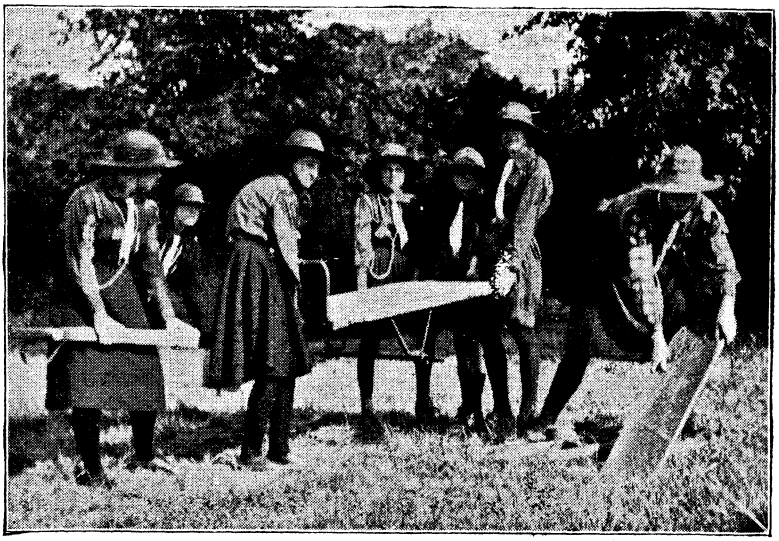
In the home, duties were rendered less irksome by the sense of duty and usefulness that was taught and formed part of the Guide law. And so the movement grew and prospered, and once more the truth of David Everett's line (written so long ago, which has now become a proverb), "Tall oaks from little acorns grow," became true of the Girl Guides.

How rapid the growth of the movement has been is best shown by figures. In 1919 a census was taken, which showed that there were 93,782 Guides (approximately) in the British Isles, with 24,891 Brownies and 4,931 Senior Guides. During the preceding year, 1918–19, 405 Commissioners and 2,172 Company Officers were appointed,

To-day there are considerably more than 275,000 Guides and officers scattered throughout the world, about one-half of whom are in the British Isles.

The British Overseas Dominions adopted the Girl Guide movement enthusiastically. Great developments have already taken place, and the support of the Government authorities has been readily given. In January of last year a Council was established, with the Chief Commissioner, Lady Baden-Powell, as Chairman, for the purpose of assisting the correspondence with the British Overseas Dominions and Colonies, and the same year saw the setting up of a Girl Guide International Council for the purpose of corresponding with foreign

countries in which the movement had taken root. The Council is a purely advisory body, as it was found that other countries would wish modifications of the usual machinery of government for Girl Guides, and to run the Guides in their own way, with their own leaders, badges, uniform, and rules.



GIRL GUIDES MUST KNOW HOW TO TAKE A TREK CART TO PIECES AND TO PUT IT TOGETHER AGAIN.

Some thirty foreign countries have now Girl Guide organisations in more or less complete working order. In many the movement has met with astonishing success. Among the countries in which the Girl Guide may be found doing good work and learning to live for others as well as for herself are those so far apart as Algeria and the Argentine, Belgium and Brazil, France and Japan, China and Peru, Poland and Siam, Norway and Syria, Holland and Chile, while most European countries, including the newly-formed Republic of Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Roumania, Serbia, Switzerland, Greece, and Denmark, have Girl Guide organisations.

The addition of 80,419 members, which was accomplished in 1919, is a performance of which the Council have every reason to be proud, and it speaks eloquently for the splendid voluntary work that was done in the difficult period which immediately succeeded the Armistice and peace.



A CAMP COOKHOUSE, AND THE COOKS AT WORK.

By reason of the rapid growth of the movement, Headquarters found themselves faced by the problem of accommodation. The premises at 76, Victoria Street, Westminster, were no longer extensive enough for the enormously increased work that had to be done. In the middle of the summer of last year a move was made to 25, Buckingham

Palace Road, S.W. 1, where a fine building is jointly occupied by the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, and an excellent and up-to-date depôt for the sale of equipment and publications has been opened.

During the War the Girl Guides more than justified the high hopes that their officers had for them. They played no mean part in bringing about the victory, serving as orderlies and ward-maids in hospitals, and in various other capacities, and as messengers in Government offices and other War organisations. Large numbers worked hard and ceaselessly in providing garments for soldiers and refugees, and many of the Girl Guide club-rooms were fitted as emergency first-aid stations for the treatment of accidents and air raid casualties. A number of Girl Guides were appointed to serve as orderlies at the Peace Conference in Paris—an honour much appreciated as indicating a recognition of their services and usefulness during the War.

Individually, too, the girls have many of them done helpful and self-sacrificing service in the homes of poorer neighbours as well as in those of people in their own station in life.



THE GIRL GUIDE AS GARDENER.

Now that these special activities have largely come to an end, and there is a spirit of disquietude and unrest amongst young and old alike, the movement is confronted with difficulties, undoubtedly, but also with unrivalled opportunities for usefulness and self-sacrificing service. The latter is, indeed, the soul of the organisation.

"The Girl Guides have come to stay." It is not an elegant, but it is an expressive phrase. They are nowadays accepted as a feature of our national life, and the organisation as a piece of machinery for the bringing about of national efficiency among girls. Parents, too, have learned that to be a Girl Guide does not mean that a girl is less home-loving and tractable, but, indeed, very often more so. There are, however, numbers of people who have but a shadowy idea of the work that is being done in the training of girls by means of an attractive scheme of combined work and play, which tends to develop all that is best in them and to check qualities which are bad. Gradually the machinery for doing this has been built up, and now, by the institution of the Brownie Packs (junior Guides corresponding in some measure to the Wolf Cubs of the Boy Scouts), girls under the age of eleven are early brought into touch with the work and training of the Guide movement. The Guides are from the ages of eleven to eighteen. The Senior Guides were started with the double object



THE GIRL GUIDE OFTEN HELPS IN COTTAGE HOMES WHEN THE MOTHER IS UNWELL.



GIRL GUIDES WORKING FOR THEIR COOKERY BADGES.

of attracting to the movement older girls and women who have not previously been Guides, and of retaining the older Guides who have not attained to officer rank, and would, under ordinary circumstances, leave their companies at the age of eighteen. It is in saving the latter kind of wastage, and in preventing the drifting off of girls at the most critical period of their lives, that the Senior Guides section of the movement is doing such excellent work.

One had been accustomed in the past to hear it said: "Very little is asked of the Guides. They play about. Very amusing, no doubt, and nice for them, and quite good in its way, but what is the use of it all?"



MILKING.



A COURSE OF TRAINING AT A MODEL DAIRY FOR A DAIRYMAID'S BADGE

The Guide law in itself is a refutation of such statements and opinions, even if there were not many thousands of people who have been helped and cheered by "the smiling girls in blue."

The Guide law has ten points: (*a*) A Guide's honour is to be trusted. (*b*) A Guide is loyal. (*c*) A Guide's duty is to be useful and help others. (*d*) A Guide is a friend to all and a sister to every other Guide. (*e*) A Guide is courteous. (*f*) A Guide is a friend to animals. (*g*) A Guide obeys orders. (*h*) A Guide smiles and sings under all difficulties. (*i*) A Guide is thrifty. (*j*) A Guide is pure in thought, in word, and in deed.

A counsel of perfection one may, perhaps,

say, but she climbs highest who turns her face to the stars.

The aim of the movement is to develop the ideal of good citizenship among girls by forming their characters; training them in habits of obedience, self-reliance, and observation; inculcating the spirit of loyalty and thoughtfulness for others; teaching them handicrafts useful to themselves and of service to the public at large; promoting their physical development; making it possible for them to keep orderly homes and to bring up good and healthy children. Co-operation with educational and other authorities working to this end is always sought.



LEARNING TO HARNESS A HORSE FOR FARM WORK.

With the experience gained by the work of the Boy Scouts, many pitfalls were avoided. It was recognised that girls, in a measure, started with a handicap, and that it would be more difficult to arouse enthusiasm at first in sports and pastimes which would lead on to the learning of many useful crafts. But it was soon found that if there is the human boy, there is also the human girl, longing for the spice of adventure



A GIRL GUIDE HARVESTER OFF TO WORK AT DAWN.

that some kinds of Guide work offer, and the desire to let off exuberant vitality, which it was the fashion, but comparatively a few years ago, to suppress. It was also discovered that girls graduated naturally and almost imperceptibly from games to work. Any girl may join who will accept as a basis of membership the threefold promise of the Guides: (*a*) To be loyal to God and the King. (*b*) To try and help other people at all times. (*c*) To keep the law of the Guides. Or, in the case of Brownies, the twofold promise which comprises (*a*) and (*b*), with their own Guide law of the Brownie Pack. (1) The Brownie gives in to older folk. (2) The Brownie does not give in to herself.

The Girl Guide motto "Be Prepared!" has its own significance, and the cheerful motto of the Brownies "Lend a Hand!" forms an early incentive to useful service.

It is a pretty idea that each patrol—which consists of six or eight Guides, including the patrol leader; a company is formed of from sixteen to forty girls, with a captain, lieutenant, and patrol leaders—should be named after a flower or bird. Some of the flowers have, of course, special significance in plant lore, and in many cases the choice has been made with this in view. The public are now familiar with the knots of gay-coloured ribbons worn by the girls on the left shoulder, and the badge of the flower or bird after which the patrol is named on the flap of the Guide's left pocket.

The training of the Girl Guides is mainly directed along four lines: (1) Character and intelligence forming. (2) Handicraft and skill. (3) Service for others. (4) Health and physical development. In connection with the first-named the importance of a good environment (so often lacking) is considered and, so far as possible, provided.



ATTENDING TO A DOG IN DISTRESS: KINDNESS TO ANIMALS IS ONE OF THE GUIDE LAWS.

Self-discipline and sense of responsibility are fostered, and by means of games the give-and-take of life is exercised. Though there is no direct religious teaching other than that afforded by Church parades on special occasions, the girls are encouraged to attend their own places of worship. Powers of observation are materially assisted and encouraged by Nature study, tracking, and signalling. The second line of work has been wonderfully and successfully developed, and training in most handicrafts is now available, among them nursing, sewing, cooking, gardening, carpentering, household management, and



WORKING FOR THEIR CARPENTER'S BADGE.

many others. The third line of work has served to develop the practice of daily rendering some service to others, public service, comradeship, and other kindred matters. The fourth line of work is carried out by the practice of health, hygiene, and physical culture. The girls are taught that individual responsibility rests upon them to attain to the standard physical development, and a knowledge of food, clothing, and cleanliness is compulsory.

The institution of proficiency badges has done much to encourage the girls to pursue their favourite courses of study seriously, and the friendly but keen rivalry between the girls themselves, and between the different patrols of various companies, for the possession of the greatest number of badges has stimulated the interest in many subjects which the individual girls might not otherwise have taken up.

The subjects for which proficiency badges are now given number nearly a hundred, including such diverse pursuits as artist and air mechanic, sick nurse and dancer, astronomer and botanist, dairymaid and musician, clerk and cobbler, embroideress and electrician, housekeeper and interpreter, landworker and milliner, rifle shot and printer, toymaker and telegraphist.

Other special awards or badges are the Silver Fish, given for some very special service to the movement; the Nurse Cavell Badge, given for special pluck in life-saving, self-sacrifice in work for others, endurance of suffering or calmness in danger. It carries with it the obligation to have passed some of the tests bearing upon the special qualities the possession of which Nurse Cavell so nobly demonstrated; the Nursing Sister's Badge (Red Cross armlet), awarded to First Class Guides holding the following badges—sick nurse, housekeeper, laundress, knitter, domestic service; the Gold Cord (replacing the old Silver Fish award), given



A "BROWNIE" PACK WHICH HAS WON THE CHALLENGE CUP.

after at least two years' service, and after earning a first-class badge, and those for sick nursing, handy-woman, signaller or swimmer, athlete or gymnast, nurse or child nurse, laundress or finisher, scribe or clerk, domestic service, and six others chosen by the Guide herself.

In making recommendations for the Gold Cord, the personal character of the girl is always taken into consideration, and she must have rendered good service to her company. In the case of the recommendation of an officer for the distinction, she must have rendered good service to the movement as a whole.

of living and increased railway fares, have many of them enjoyed a country holiday they might have otherwise gone without. Usually the camps are pitched in some park lent by a sympathiser with the movement, or by an officer, or at a farmstead where there is a good water-supply, a barn available for use in wet weather, and facilities for Nature study, drill, camp life, sports and pastimes, and the opportunity for study to qualify for some of the badges, such as those of gardener, bee-keeper, dairy farmer, poultry farmer, fruit grower, landworker, and agriculturist, which would otherwise not be readily obtained by



FIRST AID BY THE WAYSIDE.

The scarcity of officers, always a difficulty in voluntary organisations, has been felt by the Girl Guides. Steps have been taken in some measure to meet the deficiency by the establishing of three official training schools for the South, West, and North of England. Excellent work has been done each year since their foundation.

In the Boy Scout movement training and holiday camps have always played an important and delightful part. They have now become a feature of the Girl Guides, although with wise restrictions and necessarily greater care in the arrangements.

They have each year been a source of healthful enjoyment to an increasing number of Guides, who, in these days of high cost

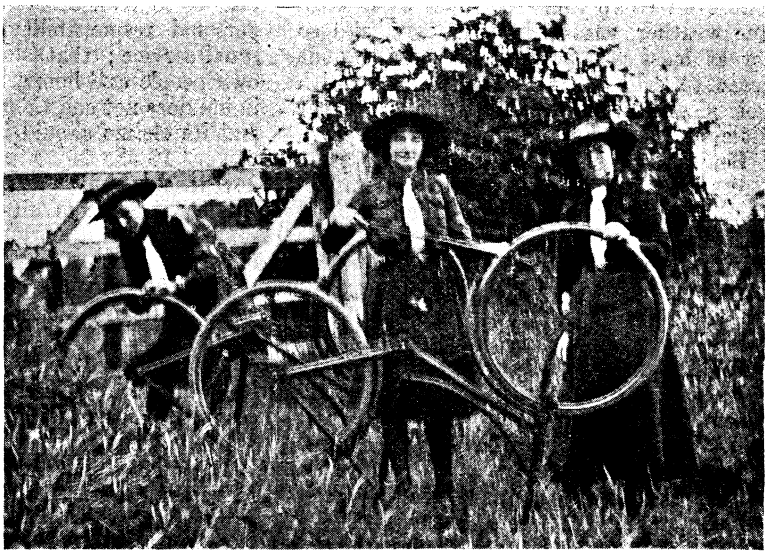
dwellers in the large towns or suburban areas.

Discipline is strictly maintained; but it is remembered that Jill may as easily be made a dull girl by all work and no play as may Jack a dull boy, and games and sports of all kinds, excursions and visits to interesting places in the near neighbourhood of the camp, form a great feature of the programme.

Going down by rail and pitching the tents is rare sport, and if a tent collapses upon someone inside, the merriment is not less, but more. Then there is the finding of the water-supply (which must be above suspicion), the digging of shallow trenches round the tents to carry off the rain, if it

should come, the discovering of the owners of cooks' badges, who are to experiment on the digestions of their companions, and the appointment of the orderlies.

The building of a fire is not the easy matter some people would think, especially in a high wind or after rain, when the only available wood may be none too dry. There is more to be done in the cooking line than to boil a kettle, and the true Guide cook scorns to be driven to ask the help of a neighbouring cottage. Getting in the stores, too, is always fun, and the girl who has successfully passed the searching test before she can obtain the camper's badge will have at her fingers' ends the whole subject of camping, including ordering of stores, sanitary arrangements, equipment, contracts with tradesmen, the making of the camp oven, and the drawing up of orderly duties for a week on the patrol system.



BICYCLE REPAIRS.



PATH-FINDING.

The camp fire pow-wow is an excellent and picturesque institution, though sometimes the wind will shift and blow the smoke in everyone's faces, endeavouring, as one girl put it, "to turn us into smoked haddocks."

If there be a pond, free of weeds, in the neighbourhood, the swimmers of the party will be in their element, and the non-swimmers will not have much rest until they are well on towards getting their proficiency badges. If the camp is by the sea, all the girls will bathe daily in suitable weather.

The days are very busy in camp. Inspections, the preparation of the meals, rest (which is wisely insisted on), games, excursions, and study for different badges, make up a very full day. Girls are not much less given to practical jokes, too, than are boys, and many tales go home of the pranks that are played in all good nature and from an excess of high spirits that fine weather, fresh air, and the freedom of the country seem to induce.

When the time comes to strike the tents, but not, like the traditional Bedouins, silently flit away, the Guides mostly feel that the days have gone all too quickly.

But even camp life, delightful as it is in fine weather, cannot last for ever, and so for at least a time the fields and woods cease to echo with the sounds of girlish voices, and the blue-clad figures no longer flit across the turf or through the glades.

Bearing in mind that there are two great forces that must be used to build up the civilisation of the future, education and environment, one is brought to recognise the fact that these two underlie the Girl Guide Movement of to-day, which endeavours, on the one hand, to educate the girls in the largest sense of the word (that is, by active practice, not passive perception), physically, mentally, morally; and, on the other hand, to bind them together in a great and jolly comradeship which stretches over the world.

All who realise the need for character training on the widest basis, so that girls may be enabled and aided to take advantage of the new careers now opening up for them, will recognise that in the Girl Guide Movement one has a great and beneficent force, well-disciplined, but hampered by few traditions, and always anxious to adapt itself to the ever-changing needs of the race of girls of to-day.

Every step in training a Guide has a motive behind it. She acquires that which few ordinary schools can teach, and she is taught to realise to the full that she has personal responsibility and a call to personal service; that she has a duty to her own people and home, but that her mission in life does not end there, although the home and its claims should never have a second place. If she is to prove a true Guide, her ideals must be high, because Girl Guides come from all classes of the community—from factory workers and natives of far-distant climes, elementary school girls, high school girls, rich girls and poor girls. It is possible to teach all, help all, and win all.

The work of individual service is not undertaken as a "side line" of life in the case of the true Girl Guide, but as a very definite guiding principle.

It is doubtless for this reason that the movement has enlisted the sympathy and support of the highest in the land. Its Patroness is H.R.H. Princess Louise, and to H.R.H. Princess Mary it owes much. She is an active President, who has on numberless occasions evinced her deep interest in the Girl Guides and the principles which govern the organisation. Many of the great rallies, at which thousands of Girl Guides have been passed in review, have been graced by her presence, and she has by her kindly interest become to thousands a very real and beloved personality.

THE GARDEN OF ROSES

By RALPH COBINO

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

ROSES were in the heyday of their beauty when Matheson asked Rose Everseley the way to Donbrook Farm. Her name was unknown to him then, but he felt she matched the flowers she was gathering.

"Donbrook Farm," Matheson repeated. "A trap met the train. I sent my luggage by it, and said I preferred to walk. But these twisting lanes of yours——" He laughed ruefully. "Have all the sign-posts been stolen?"

"We keep them for the great highways," she smiled at him. "Our lanes we treat as familiar friends who need no introduction."

"A pretty conceit, but trying for strangers. Am I further from Donbrook Farm than I was when I started?"

She put down her flower basket and turned to the gate.

"Let me show you."

There was a musical lilt in her voice that pleased Matheson. She had dark hair and vivid colouring—a damask rose among women.

"Donbrook Farm is as old as the adjacent castle," Matheson quoted from memory. "There is wonderful oak, an old bowling green, yew trees——" He ended in another tone: "Also, I hope, eggs, cream, and roast chicken. The people who live there——" His pause implied a question mark.

"The Drancots. I know they'll do all they can to make you happy." She came to a standstill. "Through the trees—a little to your right—you can see the farm. Go through the next gate and follow the field path."

"I'm grateful to you," Matheson said. "I might have wandered for hours."

"The lanes often puzzle strangers." She was peering through tree branches at the distant farm. "Even from here you can see how charming Donbrook is."

Matheson stood looking after her for a minute. He liked the poise of her head. No city beauty could give her lessons in charm of voice and gesture.

He followed the field path, and presently the beauty of Donbrook came upon him like an assault. The garden showed vivid—pergolas afire with ramblers, and rose trees everywhere, crimson petals against a background of leaves. The house was ivy-covered, with quaint oriel windows. On the roof pigeons were preening themselves in the sunshine.

The farmer's wife came to the door to greet him. She led the way to his sitting-room, and he felt her eyes covertly on him as he looked admiringly from the white walls to the oak-beamed ceiling.

"I am in luck," he exclaimed. "The place far exceeds your written description. I began to think I was never going to find it. I wandered like a man in a maze. I was in despair when I chanced upon a guide."

"A guide?"

"A young lady in a rose garden, not very far from here."

He saw a quick change on Mrs. Drancot's face, gone as soon as he perceived it. In a moment she had turned to the door and was leading the way up shallow oak stairs to Matheson's bedroom.

Matheson strode to the window and looked out. Beyond the flower garden came the soft green of field and orchard, the whole scene set in the cup of the hills. Through a cleft in the trees there was a peep of the cottage where he had asked for guidance earlier in the day.

Later in the evening he found Mrs.

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Drancot's cooking the last addition to the sum total of his comfort. He told her so when she came to clear the supper table.

"I'm glad I took these rooms for the whole summer."

She glanced up from her work for a moment, and her expression puzzled him.

"I never saw such a garden," he enthused. "Certainly I never saw such roses. If you close your eyes, the scent compels your attention. Even on the stairs and on the landing outside my bedroom I saw roses. Somebody had dropped some big scarlet ones."

Mrs. Drancot's hands ceased to move amongst the china for a moment. She seemed to wait for Matheson to say more. When he did not, she gathered the things together and went quietly from the room.

The moon was at full when Matheson went to bed. He looked out at the garden, seeing it in a new dress, deleted of colour, but still beautiful. Suddenly his attention became fixed on one part of the garden. A woman was moving here and there amongst the rose trees. He fancied he heard the click of scissors as she cut some of the blooms. Even by the light of the moon Matheson could see that her figure was graceful. This was not the fat and buxom Mrs. Drancot. When she stooped for the basket, filled it with flowers, and stepped on to the sweep of grass below his window, Matheson realised that he had been reminded of the one who had shown him the way to Donbrook Farm. Her back was turned to him, and he waited, hoping for a sight of her face. But the moon tricked him, hiding its light behind a passing cloud. When the light came again, the garden was empty.

Matheson went to bed a little puzzled. He had not yet seen all the members of Mrs. Drancot's family. Perhaps she had a daughter whose figure resembled his lady of the rose garden. Certainly his guide of the afternoon was not likely to be here, gathering roses, near to midnight. To-morrow he would get to know the various members of the household. There was another lodger—Mrs. Drancot had mentioned the fact when she had answered his letter about the rooms.

The fellow-lodger turned out to be a middle-aged naturalist. He told Matheson that he had spent several summers at Donbrook.

"Can you wonder?" he asked. "Now you've seen the place, you can't help admitting its attraction."

Matheson touched one of the rose trees with his finger-tips. "Roses seem typical of the place. They're everywhere—in the garden, in vases in my sitting-room, in my bedroom even. Someone must hold these damask ones in particular affection. How many members of the Drancot family are there?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Drancot and their two children."

"Two children——" Matheson invited detail by the note of suspension.

"A boy and a girl."

"Young?" Matheson interrogated.

"Nine and eleven."

Matheson was silent for a minute, staring at the roses.

"Any servants?" he asked presently.

"The carter's wife comes to help Mrs. Drancot in the kitchen. Nobody else."

Matheson felt, rather than saw, that the other was watching him. There was a hint of deliberation in his voice when he began presently to tell Matheson of his search for rare moths in the district.

A sentence that should describe Donbrook came to Matheson as he walked about the garden: "Beautiful, but with something veiled and secret behind the beauty." This half suggestion of secrecy met him the first time he walked into the little market town. Some purchases he made were to be sent out to the farm. Giving his address, he chanced to meet the salesman's eye. He saw the man regarding him intently, as though he had just heard something that momentarily aroused his interest.

"I'm staying for the summer," Matheson added.

The man's eyes dropped to his order book, and a few minutes after Matheson was out on the highway, walking briskly homewards.

His way led him past the house where Rose Everseley lived. He looked for her amongst her roses, and presently he saw her. She was so near to him, as he approached the gate, that recognition was inevitable. Matheson came to a pause.

"I'm learning the trick of the lanes. They're becoming the familiar friends you spoke of."

"You like our countryside?"

She moved a step nearer, and all that Matheson had thought of her beauty seemed to have emphasised itself since he saw her last. She was the living expression of things he had only dreamt of hitherto.

He ventured on a more personal note after answering her question.

"You've always lived here?"

"All my life. First with my father and mother, and, since they died, with an old nurse who spoils me."

"You're never dull?"

"Dull?" She glanced about her at the garden and back to the creeper-covered house. "How could I be, in such a place?"

Matheson thought of women he knew who suffered boredom in cities. A week of Rose Everseley's life would drive them to the verge of madness.

She might have guessed his thought. "I shouldn't care for cities." She smiled whimsically at her garden. "Crowds wouldn't atone for the loss of my roses."

Matheson presently continued his way to Donbrook Farm. "The incredible luck of it!" he said to himself. "To chance on such a woman! Surely the gods were on my side when I selected my summer camping-ground."

Supper was ready in his sitting-room. The floral decoration on the table caught his eye—loose rose petals strewn about the cloth, half hidden by sprays of trailing fern. He looked approval. He was still looking at the crimson petals when Mrs. Drancot came in with his coffee.

"I have seen far less effective decorations in City restaurants," he told her.

She put her tray down and glanced from Matheson to the scarlet petals and back again.

"Certainly I have never seen such roses as yours," Matheson said. "Not even Miss Everseley's."

"The Donbrook garden has always been famous for its roses, especially these big crimson ones."

Matheson carried his coffee to the window and sat looking at the garden. A jar of the roses stood on the window-seat beside him; the scent was about him like a voice. And with that thought there came to Matheson a sudden sense of something personal in the appeal of the roses, as of a message delivered that he failed to understand. Roses were surely at the heart of the Donbrook mystery. He pushed the thought from him, smiling at it.

The farmer and his little son and daughter were busy about the flower-beds. Dunn was helping them, his jovial voice filling the air. Presently Mrs. Drancot joined the group. Matheson watched them all idly, his thoughts far away. Then abruptly his eyes grew intent. He realised that he was looking at every member of the household, and yet there were steps going softly above his head, to and fro, to and fro. The sound was light—a woman's tread.

Curiosity compelled him, moving his feet almost without his own volition. As he ascended the stairs, the sound of footsteps ceased for a minute, as if someone listened intently, and then, fearing detection, fled at his approach. He heard the rustle of a skirt and the tap of heels on the flight of stairs leading to the upper storey of the house.

Matheson turned and began to descend. Half-way down the stairs he paused, his ears alert. A sound pierced the silence—a voice calling, lifted to a note of entreaty, growing fainter, threading itself in and out the shadows that heralded night. And then silence again, save for the sound of Matheson's feet as he descended.

He spoke to Dunn one day about his sense of a mystery in the air. They were together in the garden after supper, and Matheson said abruptly—

"Who's the fifth member of the Drancot family?"

"The fifth?"

"I've seen and spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Drancot and the two children. But who is the other one?" Matheson added quickly, and as if the words came with a conviction that was a surprise to his own ears: "The one who puts the roses in my room."

They were standing near the rose trees, and Dunn lifted a branch close to his face, enjoying the scent.

"Don't you like them?"

"The roses? Certainly. But what is the mystery?"

Dunn let go his hold of the branch so that it sprang back, scattering scarlet petals at their feet. He glanced back at the house, its beauty a challenge to the eye.

"Can you picture a place like that without a history? Think of the people who have lived there since it was built. The walls must reek with stories—with the joys and sorrows of generations."

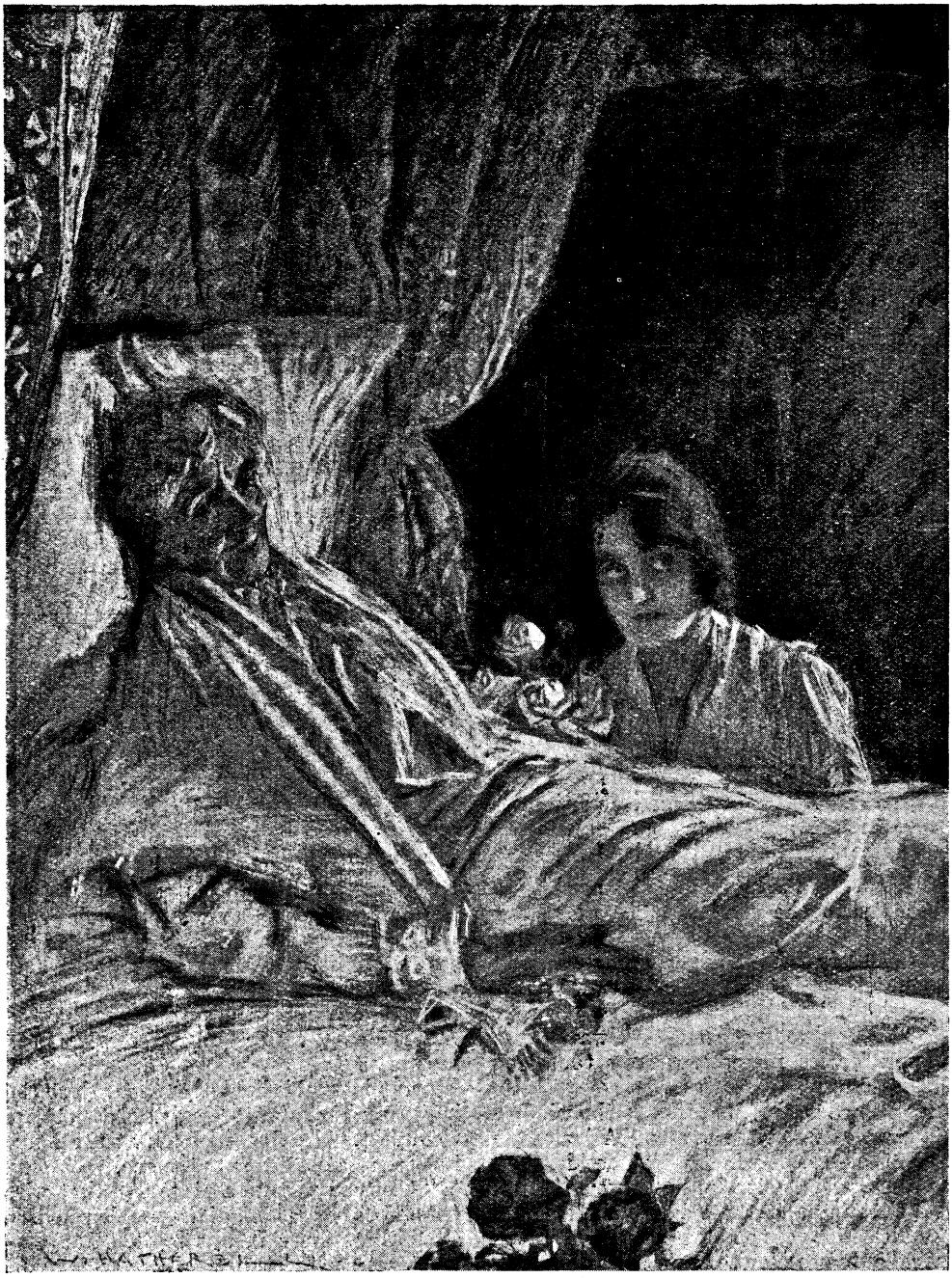
"Are you suggesting a ghost tale?"

"You can hardly picture such a place without its ghost story," Dunn said. "You don't believe in them?"

"I don't." Matheson was emphatic.

"Neither do I. And yet there is a story of a Donbrook ghost. Red roses lie at the heart of the tale."

"Suppose you tell it me?"



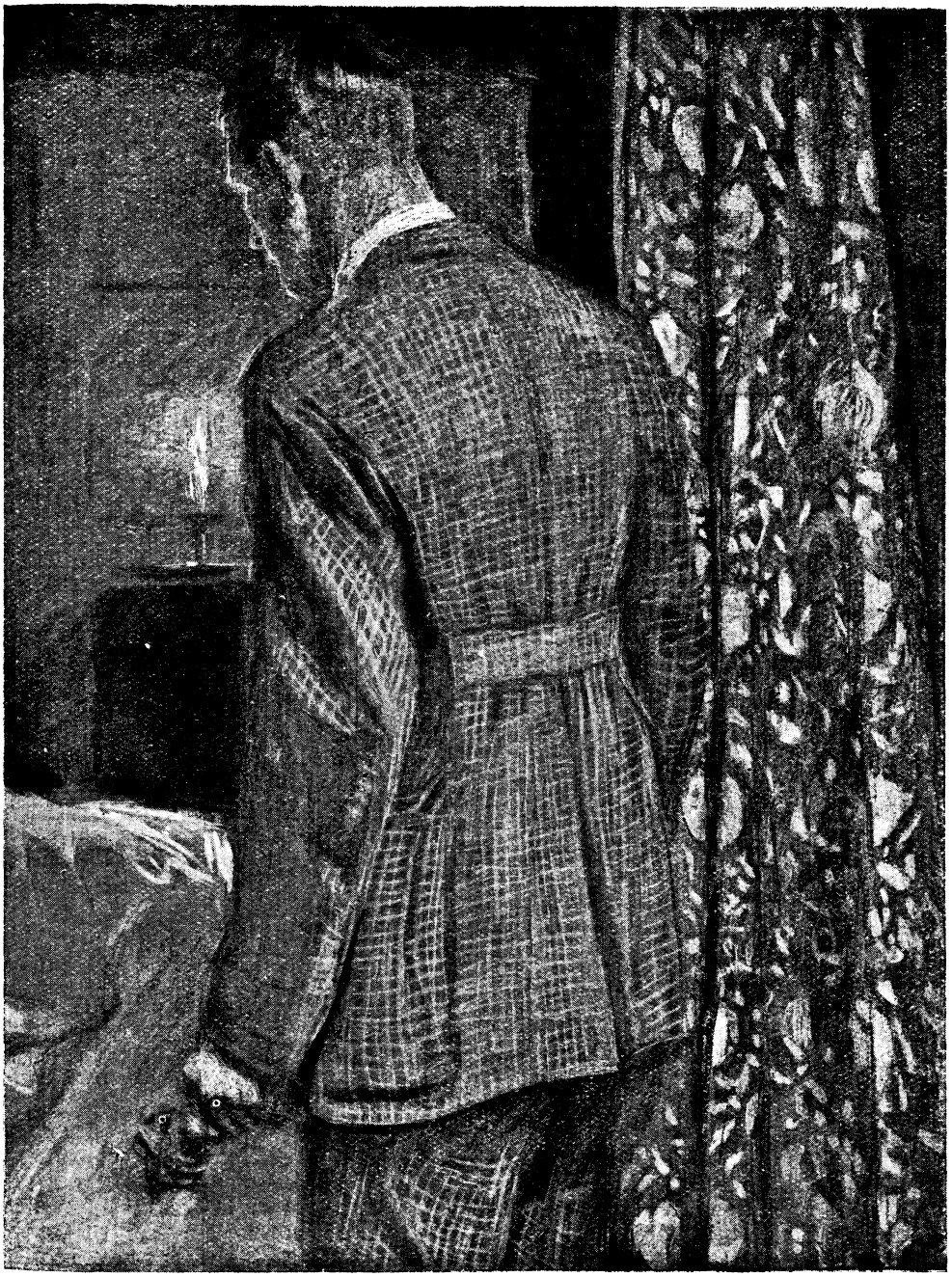
"Across the bed Matheson and Rose Everseley looked

Dunn shook his head. "Get someone to tell you who will put poetry into the telling. Get"—he glanced up at Matheson—"get Miss Everseley to tell you."

"She knows the story?"

"Everybody knows it—everybody in the district, I mean."

Matheson realised that Dunn had evaded the real issue, turning the talk into a byway that led to fantasy. But certainly he would ask Rose Everseley to tell him the tale of the Donbrook ghost. There was hardly a day now when he did not see and talk with her. She drew him like steel to magnet. In the morning he would go to her and ask her to tell him the story of the red roses—



at each other. The silence seemed full of meaning."

to tell it to him in her own garden of roses. He felt that she would be on the alert to defend Donbrook against any imputation of doubt on his part. He would move tactfully. And yet in the morning, when he saw her, he said without preamble :

"I have come to ask you the story of the Donbrook ghost. Dunn suggested that you should be the one to tell me."

She began to move along the garden path, and Matheson kept step with her. A teasing wind blew strands of hair about her face and whipped colour into her cheeks. Matheson thought her fairer than the flowers she tended.

"I started the subject with Dunn by an inquiry about the fifth person in the house."

"The fifth——"

He felt her eyes on him whilst she held the two words in suspension.

"The one whose footsteps I hear about the stairs when my eyes assure me that all the members of the household are in the garden."

She came to a pause against a seat set at the head of a pergola, so that, standing there, they seemed to look down a way that would lead to fairyland if they pursued it. Puffs of scented air blew about them.

"I will tell you the story if you wish to hear it." She looked up quickly. "Have you seen white roses at Donbrook?"

"Never. I wondered sometimes why they didn't vary the colours." He was looking at Rose Everseley as he spoke, and saw that she had a crimson rose in her belt, showing like a flame against her white dress. "But there are no more beautiful roses than those."

She took the flower from her belt and held it between her fingers, looking at it from time to time as she spoke.

"They say there have been no white roses at Donbrook for two hundred years. Before that—in the days when Milicent Drancot lived at the farm—there were white ones. Tradition has it that the rose trees alternated, first white, then red, all round the garden."

"Who was Milicent Drancot?"

"She was the girl who loved the roses; they were her especial charge. She was engaged to one of the Moores of Feraton." Rose Everseley pointed to the north. "Moores still live there, just as Drancots still live here, but in those days both families were more important. In the evenings Frank Moore would ride over on horseback to see Milicent Drancot, and at parting it grew to be a custom that they should exchange roses—a white for a red. The story goes that you never saw Moore without the white rose Milicent had given him, and she always carried his red rose in her belt."

Involuntarily Matheson's eyes went to the rose Miss Everseley held.

"One day Frank Moore went away to the wars. He rode over one grey evening to say good-bye. The roses were almost over, but they found one white and one red, still blooming. Can't you picture it? The lovers, a grey sky, with a mist of summer rain falling, and the roses . . . I imagine that Moore could close his eyes and see it all when he was far away. Perhaps he did so as he lay dying of wounds months afterwards. He never came back, but the rose she gave him at parting did. The faded flower was found on his body, dyed crimson with his blood, and someone with him, someone who *knew*, sent it back to Milicent Drancot."

"She lived on at the farm?" Matheson asked after a pause.

"She lived till she was quite an old woman. She spent her time amongst the rose trees, pruning, trimming, gathering the blooms in their season. But she would only grow red roses—they say that white ones have never thriven in the Donbrook garden since."

Matheson said presently: "I suppose tradition has it that Milicent Drancot tends her rose trees to this day? Why can't tradition let her rest, poor soul?"

They were moving now side by side beneath the pergola. Shafts of sunlight fought with the shadows the leaves threw on the ground, making a pattern for their feet to tread on.

"The first night I was at Donbrook I saw the garden, moonlit, from my window. A woman was there amongst the rose trees."

She filled a pause. "Have you seen her since?"

"I have heard her footsteps, and found red roses in my rooms, and once I heard her voice."

Rose Everseley came to a standstill, her eyes intent.

"I heard no words—only a voice calling." In a different key he added: "Thank you for telling me the story. It adds to the charm of Donbrook—lends the last touch of beauty to the place. But I am hoping for the story of the present as well as of the past."

Her expression altered, showing distress.

"Who is the fifth person?" Matheson asked.

To his amazement he saw her lip tremble. He could not see her eyes, but he imaged tears in them; they were in her voice when she spoke.

"If to-day has its story, I can't tell it. The old story is public property. If to-day has its secret, it must be held sacred." Her voice trailed off. She lifted the rose she held to her lips as if to silence them.

They had come from the half shadows of the pergola to the open again. Close beside them was a white rose tree. Matheson put his hand out, touching one of the blooms.

"They grow here, in your garden." He looked from the white to the red, and wished that history might repeat itself—that he and the woman at his side might exchange flowers as love tokens. Something of his thought spoke from his eyes, so that sudden colour flamed in her cheeks.

They came to the gate, and Matheson reluctantly opened it and stepped on to the road. Walking back to the farm, he told himself that he had let a chance slip. He should have put into words the message she had surely seen in his eyes.

He came upon Dunn in the garden.

"This tale of the roses is as fresh as they are," Matheson said. "It's alive."

"It's a pretty tale, matching the house." Dunn glanced back at the oriel windows and fell silent.

To-night the house seemed full of a strange restlessness. The usual hush and peace of it had yielded to the sound of hurrying feet and whispering voices. Outside the wind was rising, and storm clouds threw their shadows like veils across the flower-beds. Faint peals of thunder were like sounds of distant battle, threatening approach. Darkness fell so rapidly that Matheson rang for his lamp. His ring went unanswered, and presently he went to his door to call for Mrs. Drancot. At the same moment the front door opened, and a woman's figure came towards him, hurrying to the foot of the stairway. A flash of lightning showed him the face of Rose Everseley. Their eyes met in the brief second of illumination. In a moment she had passed him, and he heard the quick tap of her feet as she ascended.

The storm broke about the farm as if an enemy sought its destruction. It was only in rare lulls of the cannonade that Matheson still heard sounds of unusual stir about the passages. He wondered what had brought Rose Everseley to Donbrook so late. She had moved past him just now, intent on some errand, scarcely heeding his presence; and she was carrying a bunch of the white roses—they had shown clear against her dark cloak.

He rang again for his lamp. After a few minutes Mrs. Drancot came with it. When she had closed the shutters, she glanced at Matheson, hesitated, moved towards the door, came back to the table. Her distress was so obvious that Matheson came to her aid.

"Is there something you want to say to me?"

She met his eyes for a moment. "I expect you have heard us about more than usual. I hope you haven't been disturbed to-night—or ever." Her voice fell on the last two words.

"Of course I haven't been disturbed. Sometimes I have wondered."

"Wondered——" She held the word in suspension, waiting for him to say more.

"There seemed an air of mystery about the place."

She was tracing a pattern on the cloth with her finger-tips. "Have you sometimes wondered who put roses in your room?"

"I have wondered several times about the fifth person."

Her fingers ceased to move, but she did not lift her eyes. "Most people—all the country people about here—believe that Milicent Drancot is the fifth person." She raised her eyes at that. "Have you ever seen her in the garden amongst the rose trees?"

"Once. And often I have heard her footsteps. I have sometimes felt"—Matheson paused, seeking words—"that in some way the roses in my room were a kind of appeal."

She seemed to find the words singularly fitting. "If you saw sadness in the story of the first Milicent Drancot, you would see even more in the story of the second."

"Then there is a Milicent Drancot living to-day?"

"Dying to-day." She lifted her hand to her eyes, hiding them for a moment. "I will tell you her story quickly. There is so little time to spare. And she wants to see you."

"To see me?"

"I must begin the story many years back. Fifty years ago there was a beautiful girl living here—a second Milicent Drancot. Everybody said how like she was to the picture of the other Milicent. She was pleased to hear folks say so. She used to tend the garden, especially the rose trees, like the woman whose name she bore. After a time there came bad days for Donbrook—poor harvests, and a spendthrift son to make things worse. That was the first time they took summer lodgers at Donbrook. One of them was an artist from the city, and he fell in love with Milicent. It was just a summer's fancy to him, but it was life to her. She told him the old story of the roses, and after that she always kept roses in his room. But when the summer ended he went away, and his love must have died when the roses did. She never heard from him again. It

was then she began to confuse things in her mind, so that she grew in time to think she was the first Milicent, and that the other woman's story was her own. Every summer she lived in the garden, looking after the roses. And there grew up in the countryside a kind of superstition about Donbrook. In the evening, when shadows fall, have you noticed how the children hurry past the gate, afraid to look into the garden ? "

Matheson said slowly : " She is quite an old woman now ? "

" Seventy. Her face is lined and her hair is white, but if you saw her in the dusk, you wouldn't think her old. Her figure is as slim and quick as a girl's." Mrs. Drancot's voice altered. " You said you felt a kind of appeal about the roses. You were right. She thought you were her lover back again, young and good-looking as he was all those years back. I couldn't make her see it differently. She hoped the scent of the roses would bring her back to your memory, and that perhaps—sometime—— Now she is dying, and she asks to see you."

" Isn't Miss Everseley here to-night ? "

" We sent for her. She is the only person outside the family who comes to see Milicent. There's a wonderful friendship between them. It began when Rose was a little girl and used to come to Donbrook to learn how to grow roses. Milicent showed her. And the flowers have been a bond between them ever since."

Shadows were about them as they climbed the stairs. The candle in Mrs. Drancot's hand was a faint thread of light against darkness. The storm was dying away. In place of thunder the wind played with the leaves of the trees, mimicking a distant sound of the sea. This sound was in Matheson's ears when he stepped inside the room to which Mrs. Drancot led him. It was a kind of sighing background to the voice that came eagerly from the bed.

" At last you have come back ! "

Rose Everseley was kneeling beside the bed. The bunch of white roses lay close to the pillow, and now the eyes of the dying woman went from Matheson's face to the roses and back again.

" It has seemed—such a long time," she said.

Her voice had kept its music. Even her beauty had left her grudgingly, so that now there were hints of it to show how radiant her youth must have been.

" See how fresh the roses are ! " She touched them with her finger-tips. " I asked for white ones to-night from Rose's garden. They haven't bloomed at Donbrook since you went away." She lifted the flowers from the pillow and gave them to Matheson.

Rose Everseley put her hand to her eyes to hide suddenly falling tears. Instantly Milicent Drancot turned to her. Amazement was in her look ; never before had she seen sorrow in the girl's eyes. She glanced from Rose to Matheson, and back again, and suddenly the realisation must have come to her that she was losing her hold on life. It was a shaft of light in which she saw herself clearly for a moment.

She looked at Matheson intently and ended with the poignant cry : " He is a stranger ! He is not the one I have been looking for ! "

She lay there staring at them. Presently she held her hand for the white roses and gave them to Rose Everseley.

She whispered : " Some day he will come. I must be patient. To-night the white roses must be for your lover."

There were red roses at the bedside, and Milicent Drancot pointed to them, smiling into Matheson's face.

" Give her one. I know how sweet it is to have a red rose against your heart."

Across the bed Matheson and Rose Everseley looked at each other. The silence seemed full of meaning, as if not only this Milicent, but the dead one, too, had spoken, urging that this Rose might find joy in the scent of her name-flowers.

Matheson bent across the bed.

" Will you take my rose ? "

Their hands met above Milicent Drancot's head.

The joy of their youth was reflected in her eyes. She lay there transformed. And the transformation did not leave her when at last life did. She passed with an exalted look, as though she went joyfully to keep a tryst.

A new day was coming when Matheson and Rose stepped into the Donbrook garden. Dewdrops were jewels on the flower petals. There was a veritable orchestra of birds. The beauty of the morning was a salute.

A lark singing his way into the sky held imagery of Milicent Drancot's soul, free now and untramelled, winging its way into the blue.

A SPIRITED PERFORMANCE

By REX COLVILE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

THE big, splendid young man with the gloriously hairy forearms sent down a tricky one to Ronnie, who first thought he would glance it stylishly to leg, and then thought he wouldn't, finally surveying his prone off-stump in disgusted surprise.

The big, splendid young man said, "Got you there, Ronnie, my buck!" and beckoned to the smaller boy—lingering adoringly outside the net—to approach with the discoloured, shabby, but infinitely sacred, dark blue blazer.

"Thank you, Owl," he said, as the youngster sped to obey. "Help me on, will you?"

"Rather!" gasped the worshipping Owl. (It's not every preparatory school boy who has the chance of assisting an Old Blue into his robe of honour. As a matter of fact, precious few have done it—precious few.)

The big, splendid young man, bending considerately—and considerably—struggled into the blazer. Then—

"Don't overdo that leg-glancing, old chap," he said to Ronnie, who was rather disconsolately unbuckling his pads. "It's a pretty stroke, but don't overdo it. Otherwise—well, you're not half bad. Thank you, Owl."

Ronnie Costain nodded in a manly way; nobody could have guessed from his curt nod that the gates of Heaven had suddenly been opened to him, and that through them his beglamoured eyes had caught a dazzling glimpse of a state of future blessedness—in the County XI.

"See you two men later," said the big, splendid young man, and, lighting his pipe, strolled off toward the house.

Ronnie and the Owl watched him cross the meadow, leap the stile, and disappear. Then with one accord they sat down.

"Decent bloke," said Ronnie.

"Quite," agreed the Owl, with difficulty dancing to the elder boy's subtle tune.

"Called me 'my buck.'"

"And said 'Thank you, Owl.'"

Ronnie plucked a blade of grass and chewed it.

"Oh, anyone could say that," he commented loftily. "I mean, it was just a bit of ordinary politeness, whereas 'my buck' and 'old chap' are—well, pally, almost."

The Owl sighed. He had no intention, because no hope, of competing with Ronnie, who was a public school boy, but, all the same——

"I helped him on with his blazer, anyhow," he said.

"'Otherwise you're not half bad,'" murmured Ronnie. "I mean to say, Owl, that's a good lot for a blood like Trevor to say."

"Yes, it is. An awful lot. It's perfectly topping for you, Ronnie. And—and, I say, it's not bad, not so utterly rotten, I mean, his calling me 'Owl,' is it?"

"N-no. It certainly shows he's—well, kindly disposed. Shows he doesn't look upon you as the putrid little worm a chap in his position might well think you are."

"Oh, rather," agreed the Owl earnestly.

Ronnie Costain chewed more blades of grass. As he did so, he cast, every now and then, speculative glances toward his cousin, the Owl. He was wondering if the Owl were old enough—twelve isn't a great age—to be entrusted with Ronnie's secret and cherished ambition. There were two factors in favour of the Owl's being so entrusted: one was the almost uncanny wisdom of the big-eyed youngster in grown-up affairs, and the other was Ronnie's overmastering necessity to entrust it to somebody. Ronnie hesitated. The Owl was a queer kid. There were things

against him, big things. He was quite rotten at cricket, had asthma whenever he went to the seaside, could speak French without blushing, and had cow-like eyes. But—somehow he always seemed to *know* things, and he'd read a frightful lot—besides the cricket news. Ronnie made up his mind.

"I dare say, Owl," he said patronisingly—because it's not good for kids to fancy they're being consulted for any other reason save sheer kindness of heart—"I dare say you've noticed that I've been what's called preoccupied lately? P'r'aps you've seen me frowning with knitted brows and so on, eh?"

"Rather!" agreed the Owl untruthfully. "And I've wondered about it like billy-o."

Ronnie closed his eyes for a moment, so that the kid should not be mortified by observing the pain a public school boy must inevitably feel when hearing so preparatory-school a simile, and continued:

"Well, I'll tell you. I'm worried about Margery. Some fellows, of course, ignore their sister's future happiness, but I'm not like that. I've got a huge sense of responsibility, and I've made up my mind that the best thing that can happen for me—and, naturally, for them—is for old Trevor to marry Margery."

"By gum!" breathed the Owl. "If he does, he'd be my cousin-in-law."

Ronnie raised supercilious brows. What a confounded young egoist the Owl was! "My sole object in favouring the match," he said aloofly, "is the married bliss of Trevor and Margery. Of course it would give me, his brother-in-law, a tremendous boost in several ways, but I am hardly thinking of myself at all—hardly at all, if at all."

The Owl remained discreetly silent. He was nearly three years younger than Ronnie, but his wisdom was ageless.

"Now," said Ronnie—whose gifts did not lie in the realms of either invention or imagination—"how's it to be worked, Owl? How's this blooming union of hearts to be wangled?"

The Owl plunged his chin in his cupped hands. He was revelling in the situation.

"Do they like each other?" he asked presently. "I mean, are they dead nuts on one another?"

"Dunno. They seem friendly enough."

"Ah, that's a bad sign," said the Owl gravely. "Friends never marry. They'll have to chuck being friends, and old Trevor'll have to get blazing red whenever he sees Margery, and Margery'll have to get ashy pale whenever she sees old Trevor. Then they'll marry, sure as billy-o."

"Hang it," said Ronnie querulously, "it'll be the dickens of a job to alter their complexions like that, won't it?"

"Oh, no. *We* won't alter them; they'll alter 'em themselves when they're keen enough on each other. *Our* job is to help 'em get keen enough."

"I'll help 'em for all I'm worth," said Ronnie grimly, almost threateningly.

"How?" The Owl was frankly sceptical.

"How? Oh, by throwing out hints—and—and coughing 'Ahem!' whenever I come upon 'em unexpectedly, and—and all that."

The Owl smiled. "No earthly," he said. "That'd only put 'em off. No, we must somehow make 'em think that—that they've *got* to marry; that it's intended by some force stronger than themselves—a—a sort of rummy, creepy arrangement which they daren't ignore. Wait a sec. I'll explain in half a tick."

Ronnie waited. He was rewarded. The Owl spake as one inspired. "You know that old josser they were all gassing about after dinner last night—that ancestor chap of yours, Sir Adrian Costain? Well, how'd it be if we were to come across some ancient document, yellow with age and all its 's's' looking like 'f's,' written by him in the dim past? I mean, some yarn—a sort of prophecy—the kind of thing those chaps used to go in for—with cursings and blessings attached—gen'rally in rhyme."

Ronnie nodded. "Awful muck," he commented.

"Of course. But if we can find a message from Sir Adrian saying in a roundabout way that Margery must marry old Trevor, it'd be a bit thick if they went dead against his wishes. Anyway, it'd open their eyes to what the dead expected of 'em."

Ronnie could scarce forbear to cheer.

"Such as?" he asked encouragingly.

The Owl writhed about on the grass for a few moments, and then was delivered of

> "Every nice girl of the Costain race
> Shall marry a chap with a freckled face."

"Not bad," said Ronnie.

"Because, you see, old Trevor's freckled like billy-o."

"Yes, not half bad. Try again. Take your time and have another shot."

In due course the Owl spake yet again:

> "I shan't rest properly, when I am dead,
> Till Costain's husband can break from leg."

Ronnie grinned. "Doesn't rhyme," he said.

The Owl's big eyes grew sombre. "P'r'aps Sir Adrian thought it did," he retorted morosely; "ancestors hadn't much education. Anyhow, old Trevor *can* break from leg like billy-o. From the off, too." A sullen pause. Then: "What price this?

"When Costain maid mates with Trevor,
I'll rest in peace for ever and ever."

"Hot stuff!" said Ronnie. "That ought to do the trick. Now, how can we arrange to find the doc—— What on earth's up, Owl? Have you gone potty?"

"No, no, I'm all right," gasped the Owl, whose face had suddenly assumed a crimson hue, and whose eyes threatened to leave their sockets. "It—it's only that I've just thought of something that knocks the stuffing out of the ancient document—something that's *bound* to win."

"What is it? Loosen your collar and tell me."

"It's this. Did you spot what Margery and two or three of the house-party were up to in the inner drawing-room last night? Did you?"

"Some dashed silly game with a table."

"Yes, table-turning. Getting messages from spirits. *I* know how it's done. I mean, I know all about the theory that the table tilts out letters which spell words. And I've got a little book—a book on conjuring—telling you how you can fake messages."

"What ho!" breathed Ronnie, getting a glimmer.

"All you've got to do is to strap a knife or fork or something under your wrist, and then, when you put your hands on the table—as all the silly asses do—the knife or fork slips under the ledge, and you can tilt the table like fun without anyone suspecting your blessed game."

"She bumpeth!" cried Ronnie.

"She *will*," corrected the Owl, "if you do your share."

"Tell me what I've to do, Owl, and it's as good as done."

"Go and gas to the chief table-turner about me. She's a scraggy female who looks as if she'd blanco'd her face—you can't mistake her. Tell her I'm not like other boys—that I'm a weird sort of a chap with rummy nerves. Above all, tell her I'm a medium."

"A medium? A medium fast bowler, d'you mean?"

"No, no, not a medium anything—just a medium. A medium's a chap that attracts spooks as easily as raspberry jam does wasps. She'll understand. It'll prepare her for what's coming, keep her from smelling a rat, make her believe anything."

"A medium," murmured Ronnie, committing the unusual word to memory.

"Yes. I'll get 'em to let me sit at the table to-night with 'em, and then what price Sir Adrian getting a move on? What price a voice from the bally crumbling tomb?"

"Owl," said Ronnie, "shake hands. Dash it, man, you must leave your rotten prep. school at once."

"Oh, rather," said the delighted Owl

II.

THE small inner drawing-room, curtained off from the larger brilliantly-lit room, had for its sole illumination the light of but one discreetly-shaded candle. Remote from this feeble flicker, in a gloomy corner, four people sat round a small table, their finger-tips resting lightly on its surface. The "sitting" had just begun.

"Well," sighed Margery rather hopelessly, "I wonder if we'll get anything interesting to-night?"

A stout, reddish-faced young man on her immediate right said he expected so. What he had every reason to expect was the happiness of frequently pressing Margery's little little finger with his big little finger. This happiness had been his in some measure the night before, and he had come to the conclusion that the rest of the tommy-rot was jolly well worth it. He was utterly a materialist.

"Ah," breathed the lady opposite Margery, a pale, earnest lady, almost chinless, "I wonder! Something seems to tell me that the conditions are favourable. I believe to-night the veil will be lifted, and that we shall get something more intimate than the intelligence that Mr. Gladstone is happy."

The fourth member of the little group yawned. She was an elderly spinster, who was there simply because she did not play Auction.

The heavy curtains parted.

"Might—might I join you?"

The Owl dropped against the curtains, his big eyes pleading, his voice awed, deprecating. The V of his shirt-front and the broad sweep of his Eton collar gleamed with a pure white radiance.

Margery laughed rather unkindly.

"You, Owl? Why, you're only a kid!"

"I know," said the Owl, with disarming



"The Owl leaned back dangerously on his piano-stool, conscious of

humility, "but—but sometimes kids have queer experiences, don't they? And—and I'm—interested in—in all this."

The pale, earnest lady pushed back her chair.

"He is right, he is right—the child is right!" she whispered in the deepest contralto. "Psychical phenomena often occur in the presence of boys of tender age. Come here, my little fellow. Ronald has spoken to me about you."

The Owl modestly drew near, and none could guess that his soul seethed within him by reason of the manner in which the contralto lady had addressed him.

"Now," said the lady, patting his head unpleasantly in the kindest manner, "don't be afraid. Tell me why you are interested



that dreadful sinking feeling. 'What's the matter?' he stammered."

in these experiments. Have you, perhaps, had some strange experience of your own?"

The Owl jerked back his head—under pretence of outwitting an imminent sneeze—and smiled with attractive shyness.

"I—I hardly like to speak about it," he hesitated. "You—you'd only laugh."

"Laugh!" echoed the earnest, pale lady, with a furious glance at the stout young man, who was already exhibiting indications of amusement. "Laugh? Indeed, no; not one of us would dream of doing so. Speak!"

"Well," said the Owl, with a charming wistfulness, "a night or two ago, when I was going along the corridor upstairs on my way to bed, I—I thought I felt a—a hand placed lightly on my shoulder. I looked round at once, but I couldn't see anyone,

but—but I felt a—a sort of icy blast sweep past me."

"Ha!" breathed the pale, earnest lady.

"Of course it was nothing," continued the Owl uneasily. "Nothing at all."

"And perhaps it was," said the pale, earnest lady confidently.

"I was just passing the big picture of Sir Adrian at the time," mused the Owl.

The earnest lady nodded several times, as though to imply that she understood everything, and that it was just as she might have expected. The mouth of the stout young man gaped, Margery's eyes widened, and the elderly spinster yawned for the second time.

The pale, earnest lady shifted her chair.

"Bring up that piano-stool, and come and sit beside me," she said gravely to the Owl. "You are a medium—distinctly clairvoyant. I anticipate we shall get remarkable results this evening. It is just within the range of possibility that Sir Adrian himself might communicate."

Margery affected to shiver, and the stout young man reassured her with his big little finger.

"Now, dear," said the pale, earnest lady to the much embarrassed Owl, "put your fingers on the table."

The Owl did so, the implement beneath his wrist adjusting itself to a nicety. "I don't suppose anything will happen," he said, subtly sceptic.

The pale lady snorted gently. "Wait," she whispered, "just wait!"

At the other side of the drawn curtains Mr. Trevor—wholly unaware of the matrimonial agency about to be conducted by Sir Adrian in the realms of spirit—sat at the Auction table—in fact, "all unmindful of his fate, the little victim played." Nearer the curtains, almost glued against them, sat Ronnie, ostensibly engrossed in a dull photograph album bearing the misleading title of "Sunny Memories"; in reality, his eyes wandered frequently and speculatively toward Old Trevor, but his ears were painfully alert to catch every fragment of psychic intelligence that might reach him from the *séance* room. Would the Owl bring it off? Would next term be rendered a pure joy by reason of his being able to refer to "Old Trevor, my brother-in-law, you know," whenever occasion warranted such a reference, and, indeed, when it in no wise warranted it?

Within the curtained room the Owl was doing his best for Ronnie. A tremendous lurch of the table had already been achieved, and had drawn ecstatic cries from the pale, earnest lady.

"There is much power here to-night," she averred, gravely appreciative. "Shall I do the interrogating, Margery, or will you?"

"Oh, you, please!" Margery's voice fluttered a little. The table had certainly never lurched with such enthusiasm before. Was there something in this, after all? Something more than—well, the big little finger in such close *rapport* with her own?

The earnest lady attempted to infuse a fictitious brightness into her voice, but succeeded only in achieving the condescending familiarity with which indulgent employers are wont to address the gardener's children at the lodge gates.

"Are you there?" she asked, staring encouragingly at the ceiling.

The Owl, awed to a degree, followed the direction of her eyes with his own, and the table lurched again affirmatively.

"Who are you, friend?" asked the pale one mincingly.

There was a short pause while the Owl concentrated deeply upon the alphabet—for spelling was not his strong point. Then the table began a series of laborious bumps. At a sign from the pale lady, Margery counted and interpreted the bumps.

"*Hale, thou earth-dwellers!*"

The stout young man sniggered.

"Spelling ain't the ghost's strong suit," he commented.

The table angrily got a move on again.

"*Go and boil your head, varlet!*" was its message.

The stout young man, resenting this command, exhibited signs of wishing to engage in pointed repartee, but the pale lady hastily intervened.

"Hush!" she implored. "Don't annoy him, or you may spoil all. The dear spirits are dreadfully touchy. Ah, the table is moving again!" Then, very reverently, not to say sycophantically: "Please deign to tell us your name, friend."

After a few minutes Margery interpreted:

"*I am Sir Adryun, gadzooks.*"

The sitters exchanged awed glances. The glance of the Owl was particularly awed.

"But this is wonderful!" gasped the pale lady.

"Fancy Sir Adrian himself coming to speak to us!" whispered Margery.

"Fancy!" echoed the Owl.

The stout young man said nothing, though he was well-nigh bursting with the effort it

cost him to refrain from dwelling upon the late baronet's inability to spell his own name correctly.

"Continue, pray, Sir Adrian!" implored the pale lady. "You have, no doubt, some message?"

"*Odsfish,*" responded the table, "*but thou hast gessed aright, fair dame.*"

The pale lady simpered. What a delightful thing old-world courtesy was!

"What is the message?" she cooed.

"*Egad,*" tilted the table, "*'tis adressed to my own kith and kin. I would parley with the sorcy wench Margery, stap my vitals!*"

"M-me?" stammered Margery.

"*Aye, to you, pretty baggage, gadzooks!*" asserted the table.

"Not so much of the baggage," growled the stout young man.

"Oh, hush!" entreated the pale lady. "Well? Oh, do go on, dear Sir Adrian!"

For a moment or two there was no response, while the Owl appeared to be troubled with a slight tickling of one of his wrists—possibly an access of magnetism, and possibly not. Presently, however, the table continued its marvellous message with reinforced power.

"*I rithe in torment,*" it announced astonishingly.

The stout young man grinned involuntarily and raised his eyebrows as who should say, "I'm not surprised," but the pale lady, though obviously shocked, was sympathetic in the sick-room manner.

"Dear me!" she said. "Tut-tut! Too bad, dear Sir Adrian. Let us hope it is but a temporary—er—discomfort."

"*And,*" continued the table weightily, "*it's Margery's forlt.*"

"My—my fault?" echoed Margery uneasily. "But how?"

"Rot!" cried the stout young man indignantly.

"Oh, hush!" implored the pale lady. "Expound to us, dear friend, how Margery—unwittingly, I am sure—has rendered you so—so uncomfortable in—in the place you are."

"*Odsfish,*" answered the table, "*she is a spinster.*"

The pale lady drew in her breath swiftly; a deep colour flooded Margery's cheeks, and a deeper one the cheeks of the stout young man.

"We can easily alter that, sir," he said cheerily.

"*Hist, scurvy nave!*" retorted the table. "*I have chosen the mate for the wench.*"

"The dooce you have!" said the stout young man less cheerily.

"*Aye, by the rude,*" the table replied. "*Hark ye. In my tempestyus youth I slit the gullet of a man in a dewel, and unless my disendunt Margery weds one of the same name, I shall continue to rithe in torment and hornt her.*"

"Who's the bloke?" growled the stout young man.

"*One Trevor,*" answered the table.

There was a brief but quite complete silence. Then the frank guffaw of the stout young man mingled with the spontaneous and musical chime of Margery's laughter, the half-suppressed and shamefaced titter of the pale lady, and the ugly cackling of the elderly female who did not play Auction.

The Owl leaned back dangerously on his piano-stool, conscious of that dreadful sinking feeling.

"What's the matter?" he stammered "Wh-at's up?"

But Margery was already at the dividing curtains and had flung them apart, greatly disturbing the absorbed Ronnie in the process.

"Jimmy!" she cried. "Oh, Jimmy, do listen! This is really priceless!"

The card-players suspended their game. Jimmy Trevor grinned encouragingly at Margery.

"What's priceless?" he asked.

"Why, the spirit of Sir Adrian says I've got to marry you!"

Amidst shrieks of laughter, Trevor affected to give the matter earnest consideration. Then—

"We'll ask Molly," he said. "She's coming to-morrow, you know; her aunt's better. But don't build on it, Margery. It would be unkind to raise your hopes. Molly and I have been married only a month, you see."

Ronnie dropped "Sunny Memories" with a resounding crash just as the stout young man appeared at the opening of the curtains, holding the Owl very firmly by one of his wrists.

III.

RONNIE and the Owl, each holding a bedroom candle, paused in the corridor ere parting for the night. From the wall there looked down upon them the historic portrait of Sir Adrian Costain.

"Well," said the Owl glumly, "all I can say is that you jolly well made a blithering ass of me, Ronnie."

"Sorry, Owl," said Ronnie, "but how

was I to know that Old Trevor had been such a fool as to get married on the quiet? I never heard a word of it till to-night."

The Owl nodded forgiveness.

"I wouldn't have minded so much," he averred, "if that red-faced lout who's sweet on Margery hadn't spotted the fork under my wrist and given the whole show away. You see, I—I was really beginning to —to think, in a queer sort of a way, that—that it really *was* Sir Adrian who was tilting the table, and——"

The Owl broke off and gave a little tremulous cry. His candle, wavering in his hand, cast a flickering shadow across the portrait.

"Look!" he gasped, his voice mounting to a quavery falsetto.

Ronnie, angry—angry because he was frightened—followed the direction of the Owl's wide, horrified gaze; it was fixed upon Sir Adrian's face.

"What is it? What d'you see? What do you think you see?"

But the Owl was half-way down the corridor.

"He winked!" he cried.

SEA-GULLS.

WE are the children of the waves
And perilous caves,
Born of the grey-winged, wandering cloud
And white sea-shroud;
Creatures of islands far and faërie,
Back to the nests in our rocky eyrie
Over the changing sea we roam,
Children of foam.

We are the cushats of the sea;
Drowsily
Out on his halcyon breast we float,
Each a faërie boat;
Silver sails all furled from motion,
Dreaming things on a dreaming ocean,
Shifting, drifting lazily——
Doves of the sea.

We are the daughters of the storm.
Close and warm
Sleep the mortals under their eaves.
Like whirling leaves
Wheel we out with wail and shriek
To the drowning men and the broken wreck,
Keening the burial song of life—
Daughters of strife!

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD KING

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

IN the village of P'pie, at the foot of that gaunt and hungry mountain which men called Limpisi, or Limbi, there lived a young man whose parents had died when he was a child, for in those far-off days the Devil Woman of Limbi demanded double sacrifices, and it was the custom to slay, not the child who was born upon her holy day—which was the ninth of the new moon—but his parents.

Therefore he was called by acclamation M'sufu-m'goba — "the-fortunate-boy-who-was-not-his-own-father." All children who are born of sacrificed parents are notoriously clever, and M'sufu was favoured of ghosts and devils. It is said that when he was walking-young he climbed up to the cave of the Holy Devil Woman herself, passing through the guard of Virgins, who kept the hillside, in a most miraculous way, and that he had totter d into that dreadful cave whence no human had emerged alive, and had found the Old Woman sleeping.

He came forth alive and again reached the village. So it was said—and said secretly between husband and wife, or woman and lover (for these latter trust one another). Aloud or openly not one spoke of such a fearful exploit, or even mentioned the Old Woman, save parabolically or by allusion.

But to this visit and the inspiration of The-Cave-of-Going-In were ascribed the wonderful powers which came to him later in life.

It is told that, seated at food with one of the families which had adopted him, he suddenly broke an hour's silence.

"K'lama and his goat are dead by the deep-stones."

"Silence, little child," said his indignant foster-parent. "Are you not ashamed to talk when I am eating? In this way all devils get into a man's body when his mind is thrown all-ways."

Nevertheless, a search-party was sent out, and K'lama and his goat were found dead at the bottom of a rocky bluff; and one old man had seen this happen, the goat being suddenly mad and leaping with K'lama at the leash of it, just as the sun rim tipped the mountain-top. At such an hour had M'sufu spoken!

Then another miracle. One Doboba, a gardener, had flogged M'sufu for stealing bananas from his garden.

"Man," said M'sufu, rubbing his tingling seat, "a tree will fall upon you in two nights, and you will be with the ghosts."

And two nights after this Doboba died in such a way.

The story and the fame of M'sufu spread until his name was spoken even in the intimate places of the Old King's hut. And there came one Kabalaka, Chief of all the Tofolaka, this being the country which is separated from the Ochori by the Ghost Mountains, and Kabalaka was a great man in the King's eyes, being his *seni-seni*, which means Chief Mini ter.

"Oh, prophesy for me, M'sufu," he said, and before the whole twittering village—aghast at the advent of this amazing prince and his ten companies of spearsmen and his dancing women—M'sufu stood up.

"Lord," he said, "the crops of the

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land will be good and better than good. But the crops of the Fongini shall die, because no rain will come and the earth will crack."

"What else?" said Kabalaka, not displeased, for he hated the Fongini and Lubolama, their chief, and was jealous of his influence with the Old King.

"Lord," said the young seer, sweating greatly, "the son of your wife is sick and near to death, but on the rind of the moon he shall live again."

Kabalaka bent his brows, for he loved the son of his wife, and made a forced march back to Rimi-Rimi to find the child already laid for death, with clay upon his eyelids.

"Wait until the rind of the moon, for this child will not die," said Kabalaka in a confident tone, but inwardly aching.

So they waited, watching the fluttering breath of the boy, the women-folk going out every morning to pluck green leaves to deck their bodies in the death dance. But on the rind of the moon the child opened his eyes and smiled and asked for milk.

And then a week later, when the people of The True Land, as Rimi-Rimi was called, were labouring to get in their mighty crops, there came to the city Lubolama of the Fongini, begging remission of tribute.

"For my crops have failed, Old King," he said, "and there has been no rain, so that the fields are cut with great cracks."

That night the Old King sent for M'sufu, and the prophet, wearing a beautiful brass chain which the grateful Kabalaka had sent him, arrived in the city at the very hour the king's guard pulled down Hughes ap Hughes Lloyd Thomas, Inspector of Territories in the service of the British Government.

Lloyd Thomas, in the days before he entered the Service, had been an evangelist—a fiery Welsh revivalist who had stirred the Rhondda Valley by the silvery eloquence of his tongue. Something of a mystic, fay as all Celts are, he had strangely survived the pitfalls which await earnest men who take service under Government. It was the innate spirituality of the man, the soul in him, and his faith, that made him smile whimsically up into the lowered face of K'salugu M'popo, the Old One, Lord and Paramount Lord of the Great King's territory.

They had staked him out before the Old King's hut, and his head was hot from the king's fire which burnt behind him. His travel-soiled drill was stiff with his blood, great rents and tears in his coat showed his broad white chest and the dark brown V of his shirt opening; but though he lay on the very edge of darkness, his heart was big within him, and he smiled, thanking God in his soul that there was no woman whose face would blanch at the news, or child to wonder or forget, or mother to be stricken.

"Ho, Tomini," said the Old King mockingly, and blinking down at his prisoner through his narrow eye-slits, "you called me to palaver before my people, and I am here."

Lloyd Thomas could turn his head, did he desire, and see a sector of that vast congregation which waited to witness his end—tier upon tier of curious brown faces, open-eyed with interest, children who desired sensational amusement. Truly he knew that all the city of Rimi-Rimi was present.

"I came in peace, K'salugu M'popo," he said, "desiring only to find Fergisi and his daughter; for evil news has gone out about them, and his own wife came to my King, telling of a killing palaver. Therefore my King has sent me, bringing you many beautiful presents, and knowing that you are strong for him, and will tell me about this God-man."

The presents were stacked in a heap by the side of the Old King's stool—bolts of cloth, shimmering glass necklaces, looking-glasses such as kings love, being in gilt frames.

The king withdrew his eyes from the prisoner and bent down to pick up a necklace. He held it in his hand for a moment, and then, without a word, tossed it into the fire. At a word from his master, Kabalaka picked up the remainder and flung them into the blaze.

Lloyd Thomas set his teeth, for he knew the significance of this.

"Lord, since I am to die, let me die quickly," he said quietly.

"Let Jububu and M'tara, who skin men easily, come to me," said the Old King, and two naked men came from behind the fire, their little knives in their hands.

"O king"—it was Lloyd Thomas who mocked now, and there was a fire in his eyes which was wonderful—"O skinner of men and slayer of little girls, one day and another day you shall live, and then

shall come one in my place, and he shall smell you out and feed your bodies to the fishes."

"Let the skinning men work slowly," said the Old King, rubbing his scrubby chin, and the two who knelt at Lloyd Thomas's feet whetted their little knives on the palms of their hands.

"He shall come—behold, I see him!" cried the doomed man. "Sandi Ingonda, the tiger and the eater of kings!"

"Ko!"

The king half rose from his chair, his puckered face working.

"O men, let me speak," he said huskily, "for this man has said a wicked thing, Sandi being dead. Yet if he lived, who can cross the mountains of ghosts, where my regiments sit? Or can his iron puc-a-puc force a way through the swift waters of the river?"

"He will come," said the prisoner solemnly, "and he shall stand where I lie, and on that hour you shall die, K'salugu M'popo."

The Old Man blinked and blinked.

"This is evil talk, and this man is a liar, for Sandi is not. Did not the man of the Akasava say that Sandi went out upon the black waters and fell through a hole in the world?"

"Lord king, it was said," agreed Kabalaka.

The king sat back on his stool.

"If Sandi comes, he dies, by death," he swore uneasily, "for I who sent the daughter of the God-man into the earth and delivered the God-man himself to the Terrible Woman of Limbi, even I have no fear. O M'sufu!"

And there came from amongst the women behind the king a youth wearing a glittering chain.

"O M'sufu, see this man. Now prophesy for me, shall Sandi come to this land, where he has never come before, for is not this land called Allimini,* and was there not held a great palaver because the white Frenchis came, *cala cala*, and how may Sandi, who is neither Frenchi nor Allimini, but Inegi, put foot in this land?"

M'sufu realised the splendour of the moment, and strutted forth, his head thrown back, his arms extended.

"Hear me, Great King. Hear M'sufu, who has strange and lovely powers. For I say that Sandi shall not come to this land again—neither to the king's country, nor to the lands of the base people on the lower river. He is as dead."

The Old King was on his feet, his legs trembling.

"Hear him!" he yelled, and snatched his killing spears from the ground beside him. "O Tomini, hear this man—liar—liar—liar!"

And with every word he struck, though he might have saved himself the trouble, for Lloyd Thomas died at the first blow.

The Old King looked down at his work, and his head was shaking.

"O ko," he said, "this is a bad palaver, for I have killed this man too quickly. Now, M'sufu, your voice has been beautiful to me, and you shall build in the shadow of my hut. For I know now that Sandi will not come. But if a devil is in your heart, and you have spoken lies, you shall lie where he lies, the Cold One, and my skinning men shall know your voice."

* * * * *

There is something in the atmosphere of the British Colonial Office which chills the stranger to an awed silence. The solemnity of lofty corridors and pale long windows is oppressive. Noble and sombre doors, set at intervals as regular as the cells of a prison, suggest that each door hides some splendid felon. There are in these corridors at certain hours of the day no manifestations of life, save for the occasional ghostly apparition of a solitary clerk, whose appearance in the vista of desolation is heralded by the deep boom of a closing door, sounding to the nervous visitor like a minute gun saluting the shade of a mourned official.

A tanned, slight man came into one of these corridors on an October afternoon, and the sound of his halting feet echoed hollowly. He was consulting a letter, and stopped at each doorway to examine the number. Presently he stopped, hesitated, and knocked. A subdued official voice bade him enter.

The room was occupied by two sedate young gentlemen, whose desks had been so disposed that each had an equal opportunity of looking out of the window, and at sight of Sanders one of the youths rose with a heaviness of movement that suggested premature age—this also being part of the atmosphere of the Colonial Office—and walked with a certain majesty across the room.

"Mr. Sanders?" he whispered rather than said. "Oh, yes, Mr. Under-Secretary was expecting to see you." He looked at

* German.

his watch. "I think he will be disengaged now. Won't you please sit down?"

Sanders was too impatient and too nervous to sit. He had all the open-air man's horror of Government offices, and his visits to the headquarters of his old Department had been few and at long intervals. The young man, who had disappeared into an adjoining room, returned, opened wide the door, and ushered Sanders into a larger room, the principal features of which were a carved marble fire-place and a large desk.

A gentleman at this latter rose, as Sanders came hesitatingly into the room, and welcomed him with a smile. The humanity of that smile, so out of place in this dead and dismal chamber, did something to restore the visitor's vitality.

"Sit down, Mr Sanders" And this time Sanders did not refuse.

The Secretary was a tall, lean man, thin of face and short-sighted, and Sanders, who had met him before, was as near ease as he was likely to be in such surroundings. Mr. Under-Secretary did not seem to be anxious to discuss the object of Sanders's summons. He talked about Twickenham, about the football games which were played in that district, about life in the Home Counties, and presently, when Sanders had begun to wonder why a Colonial Office messenger had been detailed to deliver a letter to him that morning, the Under-Secretary came suddenly to the point.

"I suppose you're out of Africa for good, Mr. Sanders?" he said.

"Yes, sir," said Sanders quietly.

"It's a wonderful country," sighed Sir John Tell, "a wonderful country! The opportunities to-day are greater than they have ever been before—for the right man."

Sanders made no reply.

"You know Tofolaka and the country beyond the Ghost Mountains, of course," said Mr. Under-Secretary, playing with his pen and looking intently at the blotting-pad.

"Yes, very well," smiled Sanders. "That is, as well as anybody knows that country. It is rather *terra incognita*."

Sir John nodded.

"You call it, I think——?" he said suggestively.

"We called it the country of the Great King," said Sanders. "It lies, as you know, beyond the Ochori country on one side of the river and the Akasava on the other, and I never went into the country except once, partly because the mountain roads are only passable for three months in the year, and I could never get sufficient steam or speed into the *Zaire*—that was my ship, you remember—to pass through Hell Gate."

"Hell Gate?" said Sir John reflectively. "Oh, yes, that is the narrow cañon beyond the Ghost Mountains. There is a terrific current, isn't there?"

"Ten knots," said Sanders promptly, "and no slack water. Hell Gate has done more to keep the Great King's country free from inquisitive visitors than any other cause, I should imagine. By the way, that was German territory, was it not?" he asked, with sudden interest.

"It was and it wasn't," said Sir John carefully. "There were two or three nations which marked the territory on their colonial maps, although none can claim either to have conquered or occupied the country. And that is just why I wanted to see you, Mr. Sanders. At the Peace Conference, when the question of the redistribution of Germany's colonies came up for decision, the Great King's territory gave us more trouble and caused more—er—unpleasantness than any other of her possessions which we took over. You see"—he shifted round and faced Sanders, leaning back in his chair and crossing his legs comfortably—"it was never admitted by any of the great nations that the Great King's country belonged to anybody. It is now virtually under the dominion of the—er—League of Nations," he said.

Sanders smiled.

"That means it's still No Man's Land," he said bluntly.

"In a sense, yes," agreed the Under-Secretary. "As a matter of fact, we have received a mandate from the League to straighten out matters, put the country on a proper footing, and introduce something of civilisation into a territory which has hitherto resisted all attempts at penetration, pacific or otherwise."

He stopped, but Sanders made no comment.

"We think," said Sir John carefully, "that in six or seven months a strong, resolute man with a knowledge of the native—a superhuman knowledge, I might add—could settle the five territories now under the Great King, and establish law and justice in a country which is singularly free from those ethical commodities."

Again he paused, and again Sanders refrained from speaking.



"'I say that Saudi shall not come to this land again . . . He is as dead.'"

Sir John rose and, walking to the wall, pulled down a roller map.

"Here is a rough survey of the country, Mr. Sanders," he said.

Sanders rose from his chair and went to the other's side.

"Here are the Ghost Mountains, to the west of which are your old friends, the Ochori; to the east is Tofolaka, and due south on the other side of the big river is Bubujala. Here the river takes a turn—you will see a lake, very imperfectly charted."

"What is that island?" asked Sanders, pointing.

"That is called the Island of the Golden Birds—rather romantic," said Sir John.

"And that," said Sanders, stabbing the map with his forefinger, "is Rimi-Rimi, where the Old King lives."

"And north is a mountain—Limpisi," said the Under-Secretary. "That would be new country for you, Mr. Sanders; you're not used to mountains and plateaux. It is very healthy, I'm told, and abounding in big game."

"Very probably it is," said Sanders, returning to the table with his superior, "but I really know very little about it, Sir John, and if you have sent for me to give you information, I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint you."

The Under-Secretary smiled.

"I have sent for you to give *you* some information, Mr. Sanders," he said quietly. "I have told you we want a resolute man, a man who has authority over natives, such as you possess, to go out and settle the country."

"I'm sorry——" began Sanders, shaking his head.

"Wait." The Under-Secretary stopped him with a gesture. "The Government is most anxious that this should be done at once, because"—he hesitated—"you may have heard the news, we sent a man to interview the Old King and make inquiries about the poor Fergusons, the missionaries, and——" He shrugged.

"They chopped him?" said Sanders. "Who was it?"

"Lloyd Thomas."

Sanders nodded.

"I knew him, poor chap. But it is a fairly dangerous proceeding to send a man into the Great King's country alone."

"Ye-es," agreed the other, "it was an error on the part of your successor, Mr. Sanders, but one for which, of course, we must take full responsibility. This is what I want to say. The war in Africa has passed the king's territory untouched. There was neither the need nor the occasion for either side to penetrate in that direction, so that the Old King has neither had the salutary lesson which the passage of troops through his country might have afforded, nor such supervision as Germany was able to exercise. The result is"—his voice was grave—"there is serious trouble threatened to your old territory. From what we have been able to discover, Lloyd Thomas was received in the haughtiest manner, and the gifts he took with him to propitiate the old man were burnt at the king's great fire."

Sanders made a little grimace.

"That's bad. Poor Thomas could not have had the opportunity, or he would have cleared when he saw that happen. It is a tradition, you know, that wars in the Northern Territory start with the burning of gifts—it is so with the Northern Ochori and with the Akasava."

He was silent for a while, then drew a long breath.

"I should like to help the Government, Sir John," he said, "but honestly I am out of Africa for good."

The Under-Secretary scratched his chin and again avoided Sanders's eye.

"We have sent a beautiful little ship to the river," he said; "it is a great improvement on the *Zaire* and with three times her power."

Sanders shook his head.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"Of course, we shouldn't object to your choosing your own officers and advancing them one grade in their ranks—even if they have left the Service," he added significantly. "I understand that your brother-in-law, Captain Hamilton——"

"He's out of it, too," said Sanders quickly, though here he might have hesitated, for Hamilton at that moment was nursing a sore heart. Women are proverbially fickle, and there had been a certain Vera Sackwell, who had married a man better favoured than Hamilton in the matter of riches.

"And Mr. Tibbetts?"

Sanders smiled.

"Mr. Tibbetts is a very rich man now," he said, "and nothing would induce him to leave London—of that I am perfectly sure," he said.

The Under-Secretary shrugged his shoulders and rose.

"I'm sorry, too," he said. "Anyway, think it over for a couple of days, Mr. Sanders, and let me know what you think. You are already Commander of St. Michael and St. George, I believe?"

"Yes, sir," said Sanders, with a ghost of a smile on his tanned face.

"Six months' work," said Sir John absently, "and the Government would not be unmindful of its obligation to the man who accomplished that work, Mr. Sanders. To a man like you, of course," he said, with a deprecating smile, "a knighthood means nothing. But the ladies rather like it. You're married, are you not, Mr. Sanders? Why, of course you are! Good-bye." He held out his hand, and Sanders shook it. "By the way," said Sir John, "that Ferguson case was a bad one. We have inquiries every week from the poor mother."

Sanders nodded. He had met the wife of the murdered missionary, and he wanted to forget her.

"She has a theory that the girl, her daughter, is still alive in the hut of one of the king's chiefs."

"Perfectly horrible!" said Sanders shortly. "Please God, she's dead! Good-bye, sir. I'm sorry——"

The aged youth from the room outside appeared from nowhere and opened the door, and in a few minutes Sanders was walking along Whitehall, a very preoccupied man.

It so happened that that night there was a little dinner-party at Twickenham. Mr. Tibbetts, late of the City, and now devoting his great mind to intensive agriculture, was present, and with him a pretty girl, whom he addressed with extravagant and solemn deference; and Hamilton was there, sometime captain of Houssas, a little peaky of face, for he had taken the loss of the lady who was now Mrs. Isadore Mentleheim very badly; and, above all, Patricia Sanders, in Sanders's eyes the most radiant being of any.

It is perhaps incorrect to say that Bones was present, because he had not arrived when the dinner started, and his late arrival added something to the restraint for which Sanders was mainly responsible. He had returned silent and thoughtful, and his wife, who had half guessed the object of his call to the Colonial Office, did not press him for an account of what had transpired, knowing that in good time he would tell. She guessed what the object of that summons had been, did he but know.

"Come on, Bones!" growled Hamilton. "Do you know you've kept us waiting for half an hour?"

Bones had burst into the room, straightening his tie as he came, and bowed reverently to the girl who sat at his right, respectfully to Sanders and affectionately to Patricia, before he had taken his seat.

"Dear old officer!" said Bones. "Tomatoes!"

"Tomatoes?" said Hamilton, looking at his soup. "It is *consommé*."

"When I say tomatoes, dear old thing," said Bones loftily, "I imply the trend and tendency of my jolly old studies. As dear old Hamlet said——"

"Shut up and eat your soup," said Hamilton.

"Give me the jolly old farm," said Bones ecstatically, pausing with his spoon halfway to his mouth, heedless of the drip, drip, drip of *consommé julienne* which fell upon his immaculate shirt-front. "Give me——"

"Give him a table napkin and a bib," said Hamilton savagely. "Really, Bones, don't you recognise there's something in the air? Haven't you any sensibility?"

"None, dear old thing," said Bones firmly, and turning to his partner. "Lovely old child," he asked, "have you noticed any of that jolly old nonsense about poor old Bones?"

"Have you decided to stick to farming, Bones?" It was Sanders who asked the question.

"Yes, sir," said Bones promptly. "I've got the jolliest old scheme for raising cabbages in hot-water bottles—in the off-season, dear old Ham, you understand," he said, turning to his friend. "It's funny that nobody ever thought about hot-water bottles. You fill them with hot water."

"Why not hot air?" asked the offensive Hamilton.

"It's a pretty good job you've decided to stick to farming," said Sanders, "because what I'm going to tell you won't worry you. I've had an offer to go back to the Territories. Not exactly the Territories," he corrected, "but to the Great King's country, beyond the Ochori."

Bones and Hamilton put down their spoons together.

"Dear me," said Bones mildly.

"Of course I turned it down," said Sanders indifferently.

"Of course," said Bones.

"Naturally," said Hamilton.

"The idea was for us to go out for six months——"

"Us?" said Bones. "Did you say 'us,' dear old Commissioner?"

"I said 'us,' for it amounted to that," smiled Sanders. "They offered to let me choose any officers I liked, and to give them a rank one grade higher than that at which they retired. That would make Hamilton a major, and you, Bones, a full-blown skipper."

Bones coughed.

"As I say, I turned it down," said Sanders. "I don't want to go back even for six or seven months."

"Would it mean anything good for you?" asked Patricia quietly.

Sanders smiled.

"Well, I suppose they'd be grateful, and all that sort of thing, but I told them I was finished with Africa, and I told them, Hamilton, that you were also settled down, as you are, now you're running Bones's business."

"Quite," said Hamilton. "Of course this is rather a slack time of the year, and we're taking up nothing new for another six months."

"Besides," Sanders went on, "I don't see the fun of upsetting one's life even for six months. It isn't as if we were going back to the humdrum old Territories again. Apparently the Old King's up in arms, and there would be all sorts of trouble until we got him tamed."

"Would there be any danger?" The girl on Bones's left looked at him apprehensively.

"Danger, dear old *fiancée!*" said the excited Bones. "Danger doesn't worry us, dear old thing. Danger is the neth of my brostrils—I mean noth of my bristrils. Danger?" He was preparing to elaborate, but a warning glance from Sanders stopped him. "Danger? No, dear old friend and partner," he said soothingly. "When I said 'danger,' I was talking figuratively. Danger! Ha, ha!"

Bones had a laugh which made you wince.

"Absolutely none, charming old child, and soon to be, I hope—ahem! A jolly old lion or two, a few naughty old cannibals, a wicked old king who wants to cut your jolly old head off, and there you are! Nothing startling!"

"Anyway," said Sanders, after a pause, "I told the Secretary that I can't possibly go. So that's that."

"Quite," said Hamilton, and Bones coughed again.

"I shall have quite a lot of work to do, clearing up the mess that Bones has left," Hamilton went on, "and Bones has pretty well decided on his farm. But it is rather an interesting offer."

"Very," said Sanders.

And then distraction came, and the tension broke. A maid came into the room and bent over her mistress.

"Mrs. Ferguson?" she said in surprise. "Isn't that the poor woman who lost her husband and child, dear?"

Sanders groaned. He saw the hand of a cunning Under-Secretary in this visitation.

"Yes—er—I'll see her."

"Show her in here, Mary," said Patricia, and before Sanders could protest the girl was gone.

"Why, what is the matter?" Patricia asked anxiously.

"Oh, nothing—nothing, dear."

The men rose as the visitor entered the room. She was a slight, frail woman in black, and two deep sad eyes fastened upon Sanders, and he quailed before them.

"You know Mr. Hamilton—Mr. Tibbetts—er—miss——" he stammered.

She took the chair he offered her.

"Mr. Sanders, are you going?" she asked.

Sanders flushed.

"I want you to believe——" he began, and his wife watched his confusion in astonishment.

"Mrs. Sanders, will you let your husband go?" said the woman in a low voice. "You have always been kind and sweet to me, and I know how great is the sacrifice I ask."

"My wife will let me go if I wish to go," said Sanders, and so quiet was the room that his voice sounded loud.

Mrs. Ferguson was silent for a while.

"I saw it," she said. "They came when we were at breakfast—though the Old King had eaten salt with my husband—and Mofobolo, the king's hunter, led them. Henry told me to run to the river, where our little steamboat was. I saw them drag him out covered with blood, and I—I saw Mofobolo running after my—my darling—into the bush. Oh, my God, Mr. Sanders! He has her, that man! She will be nineteen on the first of the month!"

"Mrs. Ferguson, please!"

Sanders's face was drawn, and in his eyes there was a look of agony.

"She's there—there now!" the woman

almost screamed. "Every hour you defer your decision is a crime—a crime!"

The women took her out, and the men sat in silence, each with his separate thoughts. They heard the thud of the front door closing, and the grind of a cab's wheels on the gravel of the drive, and then the two women returned.

Patricia, as she passed her husband, dropped her hand upon his shoulder, and he caught and kissed it.

"I am leaving by the next Coast steamer," he said simply. "Who goes with me?"

There was no need to ask. Hamilton was smiling savagely, and as for Bones, he was swaying backwards and forwards in his chair, his eyes half closed, like a man in a trance, and he was uttering strange sounds. Strange to the two women was that raucous chant of his, though Patricia caught the rhythm of it, for Bones was singing the song of the fighting Isisi, the song that they used to roll forth in deep-chested chorus as the little *Zaire* came round the bend of the river in sight of its landing-place.

"Sandi, who makes the laws,
Sandi, who walks by night,
Sandi, the slayer of Oosoombi,
And the hanger of N'gombo.
Who gives health to the sick,
And justice to the poor. . ."

* * * * *

Across the Ghost Mountains came the shrill rataplan of a *lokali*, and the signal drummer of the Ochori, who sent the message, put his whole heart and pride in it.

"Sandi, the Butcher Bird, the swift giver of laws . . . Sandi Is!"

They carried the message to the Old King, and he foamed at the mouth.

"Bring me M'sufu, the prophet," he howled, "also they who skin men! By death, there shall be one magician less in the land this night!"

And they brought M'sufu, and they killed him before the morning.

The second story in this series will appear in the next number.

PIXIE SHOE.

IN my cabin there's a shoe
Tied with ribands faint and blue.
'Twas I found it on the lea:
How it came thereon to be,
That I know not; this is known—
'Tis a sweet kind thing to own.

In my cabin small and neat,
While I blew my fire o' peat
Yesterday at evening-time,
Yester-eve while clock went chime,
Sweetest whisper ran across
Hearth and floor and bed o' moss.

And I dreamt she was a-move—
That fair lady I could love—
In my chamber scant and bare;
When I waked, she was not there . .
Kissed I then—'twas all to do—
That little kindly pixie shoe.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

THE MASTERPIECE

By MARJORIE BOWEN

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

MARGARET LENNOX drew aside the rose-coloured curtains and looked out on to the dull afternoon.

No rose-coloured curtains could make such an afternoon beautiful or cheerful. The spring green in the square showed motionless as if petrified against a leaden sky; the air was chill and rain threatened; these heavy clouds seemed to have descended on the city like a pall, enclosing everything in a breathless, suffocating cold—an English spring.

Margaret let the curtain fall; she had her moment of rebellion.

There had been other springs in her life—springs of sunshine and flowers, roses and music—real gaiety—France, Italy—that May in Rome when she had first met George.

Poor George!

If the memory was a little poignant for her, it must be deadly for him. She had comfort, even luxury, for times that were difficult and vexatious, her decent friends, her orderly pleasures, her work done at leisure, her pleasant prospects of future travel, going abroad, the sun, the flowers, the music again. George lived in a horrible little suburb with a common wife and a baby, and with no prospect whatever of anything but a grind of work to keep poverty from becoming destitution. He did cheap press work—covers for magazines that never appeared above the kitchen stairs, posters for provincial hoardings, designs for boxes of cheap soap, show-cards for the counters of third-rate shops. Poor George!

Margaret remembered how they had stood together before the Raphaels in the Vatican, the Titians in the Borghese. He was going to be a great painter, and she was going to be his inspiration—Egeria, Hypatia, Aspasia.

She had always known that her own talent was a very little thing; she had been content to submerge it altogether in his service; she had felt proud to be his fellow-student.

Now—well, she was not doing show-cards or chemists' wrappers. Leisure, money, and patience had enabled her to achieve some creditable work. Her name was to be seen in the catalogue of some quite good exhibitions; she was pleasantly known for sound, accomplished work.

There was a picture on the easel now—a landscape worked up from sketches made last summer. She turned it with the back to the room in a corner; she did not want to hurt George's feelings.

But she was afraid the studio would do that—it must remind him of what he had lost. The neutral-coloured walls, with the few rare casts and prints, the beautiful flowers finely placed, the old exquisite furniture, the comfortable chairs drawn up near the wood fire that burnt on the red-tiled hearth, the tea-table with the lace and silver and gay china—Margaret was not in the least Bohemian in these matters—the piles of books and periodicals from all countries, the box of Venetian shawls just opened, the slight perfume in the air—everything, even to the China tea, the cream, and the expensive cakes—wouldn't all these be so many bitter reminders of what he had lost?

And Margaret herself, who had so much time and money and taste to spend on herself, whose brown hair was so full of light and fragrance, whose skin was so fine, whose specially designed gown of heavy neutral silk set off so delicately her string of tourmalines, who didn't look thirty-five as she was, but who yet possessed all the grace of achieved womanhood—how would she contrast with the wife from the wretched little suburb—a twopence 'bus ride from where the Tube stops, George had said, as if the important thing in the matter was the twopence?

Margaret settled comfortably into the deep chair with the amber-coloured cushions. She was glad that she hadn't married George.

Of course it would not have meant

poverty, for her father had left her well enough off to be able to afford the luxury of a penniless husband, but she liked to be free. Her life was really very pleasant, and now it seemed clear that it would have required a great effort on her part to make George paint that masterpiece, and she wasn't at all inclined for great efforts.

They had been engaged for a year, and then the War had sharply divided them.

He had gone soldiering and she had done a little nursing, a little clerking, a great deal of odd work, so enjoying it all that she had hardly noticed it when George, with as much tact as is possible to a man under the circumstances, had suggested breaking off the engagement. He was afraid he wouldn't be able to earn enough for both. Her father's death had made her a bit of an heiress—that made a difference ; one or two good commissions he had had in 1914 had, of course, fallen through—that made a difference, too.

He thought she ought to be free.

And so did Margaret.

Lately she had met so many men, and they all seemed more distinguished, more interesting than George, whose war record was dull. He didn't get wounded, and he didn't get promotion, and he seemed to have entirely given up his painting.

A year of wide events, of national crises that made personal affairs seem utterly dwarfed, entirely divided them.

Then she heard that he was married—just to some little creature he had " picked up," as Margaret's informant had said, a nurse or something, or a W.A.A.C.—anyhow, the girl herself was impossible.

And when George was demobilised, he had spent his gratuity on getting together what his wife called " a home," and taken on hack work to keep it going. And, of course, there was a baby—there always was in marriages of this sort.

Margaret did not want to be unnatural or prejudiced, but she could not help feeling that the baby was the last touch of the commonplace.

Poor George !

She had had these particulars from his own lips, for she had met him by chance in the street. He so shabby, so changed, that she had been quite confused.

He had been quite touchingly friendly, and she had asked him to tea on an impulse of pure charity—and his wife, of course.

It was really all rather dreadful. There were the memories of Rome, of certain walks under the pines of the Villa Borghese, where one had at least touched the edge of that marvellous emotion that alone can transform the world, of long hours of companionship, dreams of the great picture, certain kisses, certain hand-clasps ; and now tea laid for three, and George coming by 'bus and Tube on this dreadful leaden afternoon, with a little alien wife ! Why *did* men make these marriages ?

Margaret really wondered, and George had always had good taste.

She wished she had not asked them—it was really rather foolish ; she could have spent the afternoon in so many ways so much more pleasant.

She looked ruefully at her cakes and sandwiches. Had she made too much display ? She took these things for granted, but the other woman might think she was " showing off." That would be insufferable. She put the most pretentious-looking cake on the shelf under the table, where the cloth hid it, just as the maid opened the door and announced :

" Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie."

Margaret rose, flushing. How silly it all seemed ! But she must not think of that ; she had got to be very, very kind.

George seemed embarrassed. He was too neat ; he looked somehow like a clerk. He gave a mumbled introduction without looking at either of the women.

Margaret's trained civility passed the moment over, got them into chairs by the fire, and started the usual conversation—the weather, and " Did you find your way all right ? " and " It was awfully good of you to come a day like this."

Under cover of this, Margaret was observing Mrs. Guthrie. Everything about her was wrong, just as Margaret had known that it would be.

She was young and healthy—there seemed nothing else in her favour. She wore Oxford Street fashion with a suburban air. Her pink straw hat, with the bead ornament, was one of hundreds turned out mechanically from the workshops every year ; her grey frock-coat was of shoddy suit adorned with meaningless " motifs " ; she had a string of imitation pearls and a piece of dyed rabbit fur round her neck ; her stockings were of artificial silk, with a thick square showing above the back of the hideous pointed shoes that were crushing her feet, but which were embellished by a pair of showy buckles. She had gold curb bracelets, a black silk and beaded hand-bag, a silver-topped

umbrella, too much powder on her face, and, when she took off her brand-new brown kid gloves, a tiny diamond showed in a claw above her wedding ring.

Poor George!

Margaret braced herself. Somehow this seemed more than she had anticipated. She caught the girl's glance at her necklace, at her doeskin shoes, at the tea-table, and felt a wretched snob.

George began to talk pictures. Margaret had to respond. It seemed to her bad taste, since it left the wife out altogether. But what *were* they to talk of?

The girl sipped her tea and nibbled her cake in silence. Her manners were desperately refined. She sat on the edge of the chair, and seemed worried by her rolled-up gloves, her bit of fur, her umbrella, and her bag, from which she drew a folded handkerchief that whiffed of "violette de parme," ignoring Margaret's fine tea-napkin.

Poor George!

No, he didn't get much time for big paintings now. There wasn't really room at The Laurels, but he'd a kind of shed in the garden, and he was doing a thing there. He'd thought of sending it to the International. One chap who had seen it thought it rather decent.

Thus George!

"Tell me about it, Mrs. Guthrie," said Margaret, trying desperately to drag the other woman into the conversation.

"Oh, you mustn't ask me. I'm no judge; I don't rightly understand these things, Miss Lennox. I dare say it is very fine, but they don't seem to sell, not those big oils."

"Enid is very practical," said George.

Enid! That would be her name, Margaret thought, just like their home would be called The Laurels.

"Well," said Mrs. Guthrie, with defiant embarrassment, "I don't pretend to understand what is beyond me, I dare say. George always knew I wasn't artistic, but I like pretty things."

"Needlework, perhaps," suggested Margaret in despair.

"Yes, that's nice. I'm very fond of that—embroidery and fancy work."

Margaret, catching at straws, opened one of the quarterlies and showed her an illustration of a Chinese needlework panel.

"No, not that—I never tried that kind of thing. Mustn't it have cost a lot in silks? And the price of them now! And bad at that!"

It seemed that she had meant pen-painting and stitching on an ironed-off pattern.

"But I don't get much time now, not with baby."

Margaret clutched at the subject of baby.

"You have a dear little girl, haven't you, Mrs. Guthrie?"

How foolish it sounded, even to herself!

"A boy."

Mrs. Guthrie became taciturn.

"How lovely!" cried Margaret. "Let me see, how old is he?"

"Fifteen months."

"That's a delightful age!"

"Oh, I don't know. They're a lot of trouble, all over the place and into everything."

Margaret glanced at George, who was staring into the fire.

"It ties you up," added Mrs. Guthrie. "The girls being as they are, I don't hold with leaving him, not often. The only time he was ill was from a bit of cornflour pudding Annie gave him when I was out. She hadn't cooked it properly, and it swelled inside him."

Margaret felt utterly at sea. To carry on a conversation on these lines was quite beyond her powers. The young wife seemed to notice her embarrassment, for she added quickly:

"What must you think of me, Miss Lennox, talking like this?"

It was getting worse. Margaret began to talk of nursing, of the War—of anything in which this dreadful young woman might possibly be interested.

But no, it was soon clear that she hadn't been a nurse, or a W.A.A.C., or, indeed, anything useful. Where *had* George met her?

Margaret thought wildly of a shop, but the modern shop-girl was finished compared to Mrs. Guthrie, who had now put her gloves on again, secured her muff and umbrella, and contributed to the conversation such remarks as "she did hold with" something, or "You know what the girls are, Miss Lennox," and "Aren't the prices beyond everything? Why, Mrs. Jones, who lives next door, was saying——"

Margaret forced George into speech by deliberately appealing to him about a certain exhibition. No, he hadn't been. He hadn't been anywhere. He didn't seem to know any of the new names. He was completely out of it—absorbed and overwhelmed by The Laurels, by Enid, by the baby, by the getting of enough work to keep these

three things " going," as his wife would have said.

The visit came to an end at last, after much glancings at the clock and awkward remarks about the length of time stayed, and the difficulties of getting home.

Margaret found herself accepting an invitation to The Laurels, fixing the day and listening to minute directions about Tube and 'bus and tram—she could still afford taxis.

Well, at last they were gone. Margaret rang the bell rather violently for the tea-things to be taken away, and settled herself luxuriously, with a sigh of relief, among the amber-coloured cushions.

How *could* poor old George bear it ?

Didn't he remember the sun, the music, the flowers, the dreams of greatness, the cultured companionship ?

Didn't he recall those student days in Rome ? Was it possible that, with these memories, it was endurable to him to take that girl back to a house called The Laurels on a grey London spring day—a day that Margaret, with all her luxuries, shuddered at ? And she had prospects of other things ahead—visits abroad again, pleasant friends, fresh acquaintances, music, pictures. But he ? What could there be but The Laurels, and more posters, and more babies, and perhaps here and there " days at " Kew or Margate ?

Margaret had a horrid selfish feeling of self-congratulation. Her own life seemed so delightful in comparison with the dreadful fate that had overtaken poor George.

That very evening she was going with a gay party to the theatre. She would enjoy it all—the beautiful dress she would wear, the dinner, the play, the supper, the friendly women, the courteous men—and her life was full of such happenings.

She had a generous impulse, as she smoked the fine cigarettes she had not dared to produce before, to " take up " the Guthries, to give them " treats," to let George again into the world where he had once belonged, to let him hear some good music, see some good shows, to give him some good dinners that he had not smelt cooking all day.

But, upon reflection, it was of course impossible. The girl would never be able to come, and even if she did, *what* would one do with such material ? And to let George come without her would be a disastrously unfair thing to do.

No, Margaret's friendship with the Guthries must be strictly confined to the " return " visit to The Laurels and a present, she supposed, for the baby.

Margaret disliked that baby. All infants seemed to her slightly repellant. She had never known one intimately, and those she saw in the streets or glimpsed occasionally in a friend's house didn't attract her at all.

And this baby, she thought fastidiously, probably wouldn't even be clean, and when she went to The Laurels it would certainly be " dressed up," as Enid Guthrie would say, and she would have to praise it. What an ordeal !

As the last trail of smoke from her last cigarette end curled away into the warm air, Margaret, with her hands clasped behind her fair head, tried to dream again some of the dreams she had once dreamt with George Guthrie.

They had the power to cause her a pang even now. It did not do to think too closely of these things.

The great picture ! Could he ever have painted it ?

She still believed that, under her inspiration, he could have achieved a masterpiece ; he surely had possessed great talent, almost genius. Perhaps the War had killed his gift. Though he bore such little trace of his soldiering, it must have left some trace on his mind and soul.

She recalled some of his sketches—only sketches—but perfect things. She recalled his fine taste, at once catholic and serene, his imagination, both delicate and splendid, his lofty ideals of women, his great ambitions, and she smiled with the tears in her eyes.

The days that intervened between her meeting with the Guthries and promised visit to The Laurels were full of a vague discomfort. Margaret felt as if something very unpleasant was hanging over her head.

She was quite sure that Mrs. Guthrie would not expect her to come " empty-handed," but she did not know what to get that would be neither ostentatious nor mean.

A visit to an expensive toy-shop resulted in the purchase of a very strange-looking doll that looked like a caricature of itself, and a box of bricks so heavy that Margaret had to leave them behind.

To repair this, she bought a box of chocolates so expensive that her conscience was satisfied, and set out with dreary forebodings for The Laurels.

Dismissing her cab at the point where,

to her, civilisation ended, she made her way by tram—a heavy, dirty, mournful sort of vehicle that swung along gleaming iron rails—through a wide, noisy, incredibly sordid thoroughfare.

Margaret had never seen anything quite so forlorn. People seemed to be prosperous enough. The shops were full of good food, of good clothes; there were plenty of cinemas and music-halls and shooting-galleries, but the atmosphere of poverty, of brutality, of ill-health, of uncongenial work, of overcrowding, of utter lack of taste, leisure, or repose, depressed Margaret's soul to the very depths.

Of course she was late; of course she



"'It isn't finished,' he remarked defensively."

lost her way. She was tired and disgusted to the verge of tears when at last she turned down the lost side-street that held The Laurels.

The neighbourhood, though hopelessly "out of the way," and third-class, was yet better than that through which the tram had clattered. There was a faint, very faint, sense of the country in the air, as if, not too far away to be reached by a long walk, there might be green fields. And the tiny red villas with the big bow windows had a little strip of garden in front, and most of them grew a few violas and double daisies, as well as the usual "ornamental" shrubs.



"Margaret could say nothing . . ."

Almost every house had Nottingham lace curtains and a pot of ferns in the bow window, and they all had most extraordinary titles, such as "Kandahar," "Mon Repos," "Sans Souci," "Clinton Hall," "Kashmir," "Estelle," and "Rosedene."

Margaret wondered what possible connection such names could have with the people who lived within. Was it pretentious vulgarity, or some touching yearning after the ideal, that made them give the names of palaces, of manor houses, of foreign women, of Indian towns, to such homes as these?

By comparison The Laurels sounded quite modest and in good taste, and there *were* some laurels either side of the little painted iron gate, though they were certainly London laurels, flecked with yellow as with disease, and with an unnatural look of never either having bloomed or faded. Margaret knew their species well—she considered it a national misfortune that they chose to flourish in London.

Supremely self-conscious, she stood under the rural porch, over which a young clematis was clutching desperate trails, and pressed the electric bell, which she heard whirring within.

She noticed the windows—faded casement cloth inside of cotton lace; George had impressed himself so far—and there was no fern.

It was George himself who opened the door—a relief, for Margaret had expected a timid scrubbed little "general."

She stepped inside, so overwhelmed by the smallness of the place that she had to say something at once.

"I'm afraid I'm late. I think I took the wrong tram or something."

"It was good of you to come at all. I expect you found it a long way. But one gets used to it, and there is plenty of light and air."

The pitch-pine staircase with the key-patterned linoleum, the doors with the white china handles, seemed all to crowd on Margaret at once. George took her into the room with the bow window.

There were just chairs and tables, distempered walls, a few sketches fastened up with drawing pins, chintz cushions, and a string carpet.

The poverty of it all was stark, but it might have been so much worse. Nothing could redeem the ugliness of the fireplace and the woodwork, yet there was a certain pathetic distinction about the room. Evidently Enid had not entirely overwhelmed her husband.

The tea was set out and a kettle was on the fire. Everything was clean. There was a plate of neatly-cut bread-and-butter and a cake.

"Enid asked me to give you your tea," said George. "You see, she has to put the baby to bed. Annie couldn't come to-day."

Margaret cut him short. She felt incredibly confused.

"Oh, I am dreadfully late—I am so sorry."

He seemed more or less at his ease, but she swallowed a cup of tea in haste, and begged that she might go upstairs and see the baby. She felt she could not any longer remain shut up with George in this tiny absurd room, with the cheap teapot and cups between them.

She had selected a plain dress, but she possessed nothing plain enough for such surroundings. She felt vulgarly conspicuous. Why had they asked her?

It was a tremendous relief when a voice called over the stairs: "If Miss Lennox is here, George, and would like to see baby, she can come up."

Margaret went up. She had wondered if Enid knew of her husband's previous engagement, and had thought no. Now she was sure, from something in the girl's words and tone, yes.

"She is going to triumph over me with the baby," was the unmarried woman's swift and sudden thought. "That is all she has got, and she is setting it against all I've got. *That* is why I was asked."

Mrs. Guthrie was at the door of the bedroom. She wore a print overall, and looked frankly common. Her shoes were flat, her face without powder and red, her hands damp. She seemed at her ease.

"He's just had his bath," she said. "He sits like that and plays, ever so pretty, while I get his milk heated."

Margaret followed her into the room, which was clean, bare, and sweet with the scent of violet powder. She was instantly conscious of some radiance, something glowing and lovely that glorified the entire room.

On a pink chintz cushion by the guard that protected the tiny fire sat a naked baby playing with a couple of clothes-pegs that he was putting on and taking off the side of a small cardboard notepaper box.

Margaret stared.

The little creature was completely beautiful. His perfectly moulded body seemed

to give off light ; he was glowing white and tender rose-colour, with a great tuft of pale yellow hair, with delicious feet and hands quivering with the excitement of his play, and an exquisite face, grave, unconscious, full of dignity and strength.

Margaret had not known babies could be like this.

She took the chair Mrs. Guthrie gave her, and said weakly :

" I've brought him a doll."

" It is very kind of you," said the mother, " but he doesn't altogether hold with dolls —being a boy, perhaps."

The child had dropped his toys and sat gravely studying the stranger.

Margaret heard herself asking banal questions.

" How old is he ? "

" Eighteen months."

" Can he walk ? "

" Walk ? Come here, baby ! "

The woman held out her arms. The child laughed and ran across the room like a flash of light, like a tossed flower, and was caught triumphantly to his mother's heart.

Margaret felt abashed.

" He is lovely," she said bravely.

" Isn't he ? I've taken a lot of care of him."

It looked as if she had—the child and his surroundings seemed to show knowledge as well as love.

" It must be a labour—and a science," said Margaret weakly.

" That was my work," answered the girl, " right through the War."

She looked quite beautiful now, with the baby ruffling her hair, clinging to her, laughing till his face was like a crumpled rose.

" Your work ? "

" Yes, infant welfare centre and baby crêche. I was always fond of it—the little things ! And one learns a lot. They are so kind, the doctors and visitors, if they see you are interested, you know."

So that was it—that was her *milieu* —children, the " little things."

" I met George that way," she continued, carrying the child round the room so that he might touch the one or two pictures, the thermometer hanging on the wall, evidently his nightly ceremony. " I was working near his headquarters—rather a low part—and I had a crêche, with a garden. He used to see us as he went by—me and the toddlers, and then he brought us some toys once, and some flowers."

Margaret took her glance from the glowing child that had sprung from this strange romance. What a contrast to Rome, the sun, the flowers, the music, the great pictures. this plain girl surrounded by underfed children, in a squalid playground in a " low " London street !

By what strange freak of Fate or disposition had George been attracted to something so different from anything he had ever shown any interest in before ?

The baby was set down now, and was walking about the floor with sweet and unconscious pride.

He had no shame for the shabbiness of his domain, no sense of the ugliness of The Laurels, no distaste for the poverty of his little possessions ; his serenity was truly angelic, a beautiful thing to see.

Margaret felt hot about the heart ; she had never thought that a baby could be so —*important*. He was light, perfume, music in the room ; he seemed to dignify and sweeten all he touched.

Margaret produced her gorgeous doll from the many wrappings and rather awkwardly offered it.

The little creature eyed the new toy, circled nearer, snatched it and ran off with it to his mother, holding it up for her to kiss.

Margaret rose.

" I mustn't interrupt you any longer, Mrs. Guthrie ; it was very good of you to let me come up."

She felt she was being ungracious, but could not find any of the usual agreeable things to say. Her tongue seemed tied, and she was usually so fluent of speech.

Mrs. Guthrie made no effort to detain her. She also had left off her simpering " company " manners ; she was quite natural now, if not very friendly.

" You must see the picture before you go, Miss Lennox."

Then, as Margaret had the open door in her hand : " Would you like to kiss him ? " She picked the baby up and held him forward.

Margaret felt his wee mouth actually kissing her. He was redolent of milk and raspberries, she thought ; his grey eyes, of a crystal clearness, had for a second looked directly at her.

Margaret went down the shabby stairs with a curious throb in her heart. " But, after all," she steadied herself, " is it worth —is that child worth all that George had— all he might have been, the picture he might have painted ? "

She would have liked to have hurried away at once; but George was waiting for her by the tiny back-door with the border of blue glass. There was no escape; she had got to see the picture. Rather dreadful that, to have to stand in front of the measure, the depths of George's failure, and say something pleasant and courteous.

She followed him down the narrow strip of yard, where there were pails and brooms and humble garments blowing on a clothes-line, to a new well-built shed with a glass top-light.

George, instinctively defending his one luxury, said it hadn't been expensive for these times, and he had done a lot of the work himself.

They entered.

The grey light fell on the usual litter—some few poor remnants of other times, a bit of French brocade, of Italian faïence, and one large picture on a big easel.

This George turned round and stood gazing at dubiously.

"Oh!" said Margaret.

"It isn't finished," he remarked defensively.

Margaret could say nothing; she stared like a fool, like an ignoramus. She was in the presence of a masterpiece, a creation glowing with colour, life, joy, beauty, seemingly palpitating with vigour and energy.

Just Enid in a wicker chair, with the baby climbing up her knee, a sheaf of flowers such as grow in common little gardens in his hand; on the deal table near, a blue mug; through an open window at the back, the sunshine. Nothing else, but the canvas bore the impress of immortality.

"How did you do it?" she asked at last.

He glanced at her anxiously.

"You think it is—good?"

"I know it is great."

The painter flushed.

"She inspires me—she always did—and the baby! He's rather wonderful, isn't he? One can't help painting him."

Margaret drew on her gloves. There was nothing more to be done or said. Of course he would be famous, "made" as soon as the picture was seen.

She thought of her smug landscapes with shame—she was so hopelessly one of the little people—and of her wretched comforts and luxuries—she had so hopelessly missed everything.

"I congratulate you," she said.

He only answered rather awkwardly: "I'm glad that you think it all right."

But she knew that he knew the value of his work. Of course that accounted for his serenity—that and Enid and the baby.

And she had pitied him!

Somehow she made her escape. Mrs. Guthrie was at the gate between the spotted laurels.

"Baby went to sleep at once, so I came to say good-bye again, and thank you for coming all this way, Miss Lennox."

She held out her hand.

"Have you seen the picture?"

"Yes. Of course it is—a masterpiece," Margaret got out.

Enid gave a curious smile.

"I'm glad you think so. I wanted you to see it. I don't like his old friends to think that, because I'm not artistic, George had gone off in his work."

The two women glanced into each other's eyes, understanding each other perfectly. Margaret turned away and went down the long road towards the trams.

A STARVING BIRD.

THERE droops a starving bird upon the frozen ledge;
No note he sang
At dawn, nor twitters now at dusk; and on the hedge
No berries hang.

How like this piteous, solitary and stricken bird,
Dying unfed,
Were I, if suddenly there came the darkening word
That thou wert dead!

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

THE SUPERSTITION

By H. F. FRAMPTON

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

THERE had been a light fall of snow in the night, but Christmas morning dawned brightly. Richard Wilton, tall and fair, and at that moment pyjama-clad, pulled aside the red plush curtain before his bedroom window and, yawning, looked out on a landscape white and glittering, like the froth on a glass of iced ginger-beer.

The disassociation of ideas between iced ginger-beer and a Christmas morning displeased him: he felt that a logical mind like his own should be able to do better than that. But the nip in the air stung him out of his half-somnolent state. He dressed and descended to the grounds of the house.

From the servants' quarters only came sounds of activity. From the kitchen chimney a spiral of smoke wavered vertically above the roofs. The remainder of the house was quiet. A faint and merry tinkle of bells broke out from the little church in the valley. It was eight o'clock.

Presently Richard's attention was attracted by a clean-cut track on the unbroken carpet of snow which concealed the paths of the long garden. He saw that it had been made by a small, high-heeled shoe, and led to the neglected rustic summer-house at the bottom of the garden. He followed the footprints to the door of the summer-house and looked inside.

"A merry Christmas," he gravely exclaimed. "Is it lucky or unlucky to walk in the footsteps of another?"

"A merry Christmas," returned the girl inside the summer-house. "I really don't know. Perhaps Mrs. Lancaster could tell you."

There was a heightened colour in her cheeks for which the sharp air was only partly responsible. Ordinarily the regard from her grey eyes was direct and at times disconcerting. Just now it was averted. She was thinly clad beneath a warm sports coat, into the pockets of which she had thrust her hands.

Richard decided that the door of the summer-house framed the prettiest picture he had ever seen. He was content to go on gazing, but the silence was growing irksome to the girl.

"Are you satisfied?" she inquired.

"I could never," breathed Richard, "be quite satisfied."

"I don't understand," said the girl. "It was so silly of Mrs. Lancaster to tell you. I mean, it all becomes so very obvious, doesn't it?"

"Does it?" puzzled Richard. "I don't notice it."

She deigned no enlightenment.

"Let me see," began the young man. "Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster are my fellow-guests. You are the daughter of my hostess. Something that Mrs. Lancaster has told me—presumably last night, because I haven't seen her yet this morning—is silly because it makes everything so obvious. Now, I should have thought that a remark which made everything obvious would be sapient, not silly. Can't you give me a clue? I'm all right dogging footprints, but higher realms of deductive work are just out of reach."

Phyllis Meyberry shrugged inside her sports jacket, and issued from the summer-house.

"Let's go and have breakfast," she suggested. "Aren't the church bells pretty? Morning service is at ten-thirty."

She passed him on her way housewards, and he thoughtfully followed in her wake.

At the breakfast table he was silent, but the cheerful voices of the ladies and the deep tones of Lancaster and Phyllis's brother Bill concealed his shortcoming.

Under cover of this animation, Mrs. Meyberry leaned forward to address him.

"In many things you remind me strongly of my poor husband," she said. The gentle expression in her face had not faded with the years, nor had the motherly manner failed to survive the upbringing of her children. "I think that must be why Billy

thinks so much of you. Billy's father seldom uttered a word until after breakfast."

* * * * *

"It was very silly of you to tell me last night," began Richard severely.

The house-party was on its way back from morning service. In front there were Phyllis, her mother, and a youth named Philip Denton, Lancaster and Bill Meyberry following. Richard, gloved and frock-coated, had fallen behind the main body with Mrs. Lancaster, for by unanimous consent the party had decided to walk, as being warmer than driving.

Mrs. Lancaster's glance at the speaker was hospitable, if uncomprehending. She considered Richard by far the most interesting member of the party.

"Why? What did I tell you?" she demanded.

"I don't know," returned Richard brightly —"except that, whatever it was, it makes everything very obvious. Following my usual custom," he continued portentously and untruthfully, "I rose this morning a little after sunrise, and saw footprints in the snow, leading to the summer-house in the garden—fresh footprints—female ones. I followed them."

"Why?"

"That," pointed out Richard, "is the wrong question to ask. By this time you should be breathless on the subject of whom or what I found in the summer-house."

"But I know whom you found in the summer-house. Last night, when it commenced to snow, I was reminded of an old superstition. You may have heard of it? Whoever is the first man to disturb a maiden's footprints in the first fall of snow is destined to be her husband. I persuaded Phyllis to try it in the morning—that's this morning."

"A charming superstition," Richard commented. "But you shouldn't have told me about it last night. It wasn't fair."

"But I don't remember telling you."

"And I don't remember being told."

Mrs. Lancaster regarded him with momentary puzzlement, but suddenly laughed.

"I see what has happened," she said. "I must put myself right with Phyllis as soon as possible. I can't have her thinking that I am a ma—that I am in the habit of betraying confidences."

They exchanged a look of understanding.

"Still and quiet the snow makes everything," Richard remarked.

Mrs. Lancaster nodded. She realised that Richard had delivered himself of all he really wished to say at that moment.

* * * * *

It was after lunch. Bill Meyberry had gone out walking with young Denton; Lancaster, it was suspected, had gone off to lie down; his wife and Mrs. Meyberry were upstairs; and Richard, entering the drawing-room, where burned a bright fire, in search of yesterday's paper, came upon Phyllis. She was looking through a window at the wintry vista. Her pink blouse and Harris tweed skirt made a warm contrast to the growing greyness outside.

"Is it lucky or unlucky," Richard said quietly, "to walk in the footsteps of another?"

Phyllis turned, smiling.

"You said that this morning," she replied. "I am afraid it led me to think that Mrs. Lancaster had—had told you of my childish antic. Of course one doesn't believe in superstitions, but it is awful funny testing them sometimes."

"I don't know," Richard returned. He joined her at the window. "Superstition is at the root of a lot of our actions."

"You don't imply, Mr. Wilton, that you are really superstitious?"

"Certainly," Richard answered firmly— "most superstitious. I believe, for instance, that the first man to disturb a maiden's footprints in the first fall of——"

"Not that one!" interrupted the girl, in mock alarm. "Don't say you believe in that one—you frighten me!"

Richard discovered one of her hands.

"Am I so terrifying as all that?" he inquired tenderly. "Why should you be frightened?"

Phyllis withdrew her hand and turned from him.

"Because," she replied steadily, "I can't —I don't want to marry the first man who disturbed my footprints this morning."

Richard winced under the blow. Mechanically he selected a cigarette and stood rolling it between his fingers.

"I see," he said at length. He had felt that he must say something.

"You see," resumed Phyllis kindly, "although I like the first man very much, I don't think I could ever bring myself to—to like him in the way—in the way——"

"I understand," muttered Richard.

Neither seemed to care to gaze at the other.

"And, besides," continued Phyllis, "there —is somebody else."

"I understand," he repeated.

"I wonder if you really do?"

The voice of Richard's hostess and the less soprano tones of Mrs. Lancaster sounded from the hall and grew more audible.

"You see," Phyllis said dreamily, "the 'somebody else' was not the 'first man' this morning. He was the 'second.'"

"I congratulate him," was all Richard found to say.

The door-handle rattled, and Mrs. Lancaster preceded the hostess into the room.



"'Is it lucky or unlucky to walk in the footsteps of another?'"

"Oh, there you are, Phyllis!" her mother exclaimed. "Did you remember to speak to Rogers this morning about clearing the paths? Because, if so, he appears to have taken no notice of your orders."

"He volunteered to do it before I spoke to him, mother," Phyllis answered, "but I told him it didn't matter, being Christmas Day. Besides, he prophesied another fall of snow before the day's out, and, to judge by the sky, I think he'll be right."

She turned to Richard.

"Rogers—the gardener, you know—is quite an expert on the weather," she told him. "We—we had quite an argument about it just outside the summer-house—before you came along."

Mrs. Lancaster commenced to laugh.

"What a droll thing," she rippled, "and what a shame! He must have been the first man to—you know."

Phyllis nodded demurely. Illumination flooded Richard's soul.

"Speaking," he remarked, "as a man entirely free from superstition——"

"The conversation is beyond me," interrupted the hostess. "Let us ring for tea."

TO A CHILD PASSING BY A FAMOUS CITY.

CHILD, whose blue eyes hold deep in them
A tragic look, half charm, half ruth,
Whose young head gold locks diadem
As in a fairy-book of youth;

Child, in your corner far from me,
Whence come you on this day whereon
The Spires of Youth I watch to see—
Sweet spires I so much muse upon?

For long the train has made a rare
Music, still travelling mile on mile
Across the enchanted meadows where
The Scholar Gipsy walked erewhile.

A sudden pause in the wheels' chime!
Behold them there—the spires and towers!
Eleven—I count them every time—
Intangible as are dream-flowers,

Remote as dream, yet clear as years
Remembered. With the Muses' fires
Touched inly, still you thrill to tears
Your votarist, opalescent spires!

Child, are you also of that Dream?
You are so English and so fair,
The Muse of dear dead days you seem,
O mystery of the golden hair.

VICTOR PLARR.



NO TIME TO LOSE.

SMALL BOY: Hi! Throw us that ball over 'ere quick, mister—we're playin' a cup-tie!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

JUDGMENT.

By Richard Norman.

WHAT my wife doesn't know about boiling eggs isn't worth eating, or, rather, knowing. She studied the subject for war work before joining a khaki sock darning society.

"Sylvia," I asked meekly, "how do you *gordons bleus* produce—

(*a*) A watery, runny, sloppy egg?

(*b*) A well-set-up, respectable, and yet impressionable egg?

(*c*) A rock, solid and impenetrable?"

"The hen, or female fowl," she replied dreamily, "is exclusively responsible for the original production."

"Tut, tut! You know quite well that I refer to the later, or kitchen, treatment."

"Time," she replied, "does the trick."

"Ah-h-h! Now we're arriving at the point. The process of elimination should be universally adopted in kinder and other garten classes. It is slow, but sure. But to revert. How do you, whose wristlet watches are all lost or broken, know the difference between two and a half, three, or three and a half minutes?" I asked triumphantly.

"I leave the kitchen door open," she explained, "and take your egg out when you throw down *The Morning News*. When you kick your hat into the fireplace, I remove mine. You are a very impatient and badly-behaved spouse."

"Sylvia, never again let me hear you use the word 'spouse' in connection with me. I never was, and am not, anything so disgusting in sound. With regard to the egg business, you're a little fibber, because—

(*a*) 1. I take *The Daily Wire;*
2. I read it.

(*b*) 1. I have only one bowler hat;
2. I would rather kick myself than it—at the prices hats are these days."

"You talk like the pieces of paper you used to shave on last year."

"Those," I said reprovingly, "were not pieces of paper. They were Army Council Instructions. Besides, I didn't shave on them—ever."

A struggle for the survival of the fittest between Sylvia's aunt's cat and my uncle's dog resulting in the forfeiture by the former of a few of its nine lives, and by the latter of the privilege of using the passage as a short cut between verandahs, interrupted the discussion.

"Before this attack by your people's dog

upon my people's cat," resumed Sylvia, "you were asking about the boiling of eggs. Tell me, why this sudden interest?"

"Ah," said I mysteriously, "you answer me my original question, and I'll answer you yours."

"Well," she replied, "I must admit that my hand was out when cook departed on leave, but after three days' practice I have picked up the trick of knowing—

(*a*) When to insert,
(*b*) When to extract,
(*c*) The egg.

It is done—

1. By guessing,
2. By keeping on guessing,
3. By serving up hot—and trusting to luck."

"Ha, ha!" I cried, toying with a small leather case which I had produced from my breast-pocket. "At that rate you will not need *this*."

"Oh, you darling," she cried, causing me to exhale prematurely. "Whatever is it?"

"Guess," I murmured, replacing the gold wrist-watch in my pocket.

But she soon knew.



SMALL GIRL: Here's a little kitten that I found, mother, and it's awfully dirty. Shall I give it a bath, or would it be better to lick it?

WISHING.

I wish, as a matter of fact
(Although I pretend that I don't),
That a certain young person
I'm writing this verse on
Had said that she would—but she
Says that she won't!

I wish, as a matter of fact,
(Although I pretend not to mind),
That the lady in question
Had met the suggestion
In a spirit less carping and
Rather more kind.



GOLDEN SILENCE.

MISTRESS: This latest young man of yours doesn't seem to be much of a talker. When he is in the kitchen with you, one never hears a sound.

MAID: Oh, mum, 'e's so bashful that 'e can't do nothin' but eat the 'ole time 'e's 'ere.

I wish—but, alas, what's the use
Of longing and waiting in vain?
She doesn't want me—
That's plain for to see—
But I wish that it wasn't so painfully
plain.
(An idea! Shall I ask her again?)

Leopold Spero.



WHILE clearing from the attic an accumulation of odds and ends, I found a small red lantern, once used for developing photographs, and bestowed it on a small boy who was pretending to help me.

He held it up, grinning with delight.

"By Jove, uncle," he exclaimed, "I've got a tail-light! Now, if somebody would only give me a motor-car, I should be all right!"

WOOL WORRYING.

By Jessie Pope.

CYNTHIA is a wool worrier. Turning smooth surfaces into rough has become her ruling passion since she purchased one of those little brushes made of wire with the points all bent one way. The legitimate use of the instrument, as every woman knows, is to brush up woollen scarves, caps, and trimmings until they assume the appearance of the back of an Angora goat; but, being a person of unbridled enthusiasms, Cynthia sets no limit to her experiments, and runs her "wool worrier" over practically every item of her wardrobe.

To have chic nowadays, one must be shaggy, and, apart from the call of fashion, Cynthia frankly admits she "loves doing it." It's no use pointing out that when the pendulum swings back to surfaces of glossy sleekness she will have nothing to wear; the lure is too powerful, and before the argument is over, she is back at work again, like an ostler gone mad.

Having wool-worried her own garments and most of mine, Cynthia seeks for new worlds to conquer, and when we travel in public vehicles her eyes range hungrily over the apparel of our fellow-passengers.

"Look at that great-coat!" she murmured the other day, in the Tube. "It's only shabby because the nap is lying down. I could brush it up as good as new if——" Her fingers felt for the brush in her pocket, her eye glittered feverishly, and the situation was only saved by the great-coat getting out at the next station.

Yesterday afternoon we were calling on a



EASILY ARRANGED.

SHE: Well, dear, I've found a flat at last, and the tramcars go quite near the door.
HE: Won't that disturb your sleep, dear?
SHE: Oh, the landlord assured me that I shouldn't mind them after the first night or two, and you know, dear, we can sleep at mother's just for the two nights.

proud young mother whose cup of bliss was overflowing, except for the fact that baby's hair was so straight and flat she could do nothing with it. I glanced at Cynthia and trembled. She had risen and approached the cradle with the wool worrier in her hand, but I intervened, and after a short struggle led her gently but firmly away.

Half an hour ago I came across her in her husband's dressing-room. The instrument was in her right hand, his silk hat in her left. It is always inadvisable to come between husband and wife, so I decided not to interfere

But I anticipated serious trouble.

Then, ladies, raise your bumpers
To those who this month fix
The price of four-pound jumpers
At three-nineteen-and-six.
Men may be discon'ented,
But every woman hails
The genius who invented
The January sales.

B. N. S.

A SMALL boy was in the habit of including in his prayers at Christmas-time the things he most wished for. As he began his prayer one night, his mother started to leave the room.

"Don't go, mother," he protested. "Last year I prayed for a pistol, and I got a Prayer Book."



APPARENTLY.

HEAD OF THE FIRM: You are late this morning, Miss Tappit.
FAIR SECRETARY: Yes, sir. I must have overdressed myself.

A SONG OF THE SEASON.

Some sing of May's sweet breezes,
And some of April's showers,
Of March, its dust and sneezes,
Of August's seaside hours:
And some in fervent phrases
Extol October's gales—
***My* muse her voice upraises**
To the January sales.

For Christmas lies behind us
And Easter's far away,
And catalogues remind us
'Tis the housewife's hol'day.
Come, leave your household worry,
And don your hats and veils,
And townward blithely hurry
To the January sales!

AN enterprising commercial traveller attempted to ingratiate himself with a country buyer for a certain big firm in Scotland with a box of cigars.

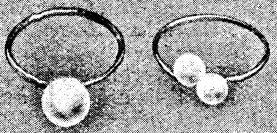
"Na, na," said the buyer gravelv, "I canna tak' 'em; I naer dae business tha' way."

"Nonsense," said the traveller; "but if you have any conscientious scruples, you may pay me a shilling for the box."

"Weel, weel," said the honest Scot, "in that case I'll tak' two boxes."



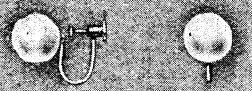
Platinette Treble bar brooch £1-1-0



Single Pearl on Gold mount £1-1-0 | Cross-over Ring in Gold or Platinette £1-1-0



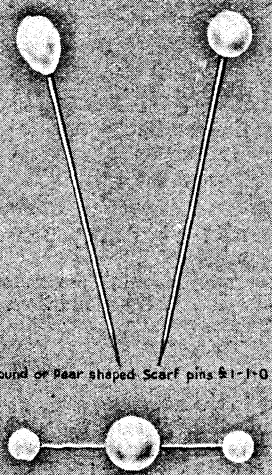
Platinette half-hoop 5 Pearls £1-1-0



Single Pearl ear-rings on Gold mount £1-1-0 per pair



Dress Studs-Gold mount £1-1-0



Round or Pear shaped Scarf pins £1-1-0

3 Pearl Platinette Brooch £1-1-0



No. 1. Necklet of Ciro Pearls, 16 ins. long, £1 1s. 0d.

An Exquisite New Year's Gift!

WHAT more precious gift than an exact copy of a rare Oriental Pearl Necklace, or any one of the charming jewels shown?

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Upon receipt of ONE GUINEA we will send you on approbation a Necklet of Ciro Pearls, 16 ins. long (Gold Clasp 2/6 extra, and other lengths at proportionate rates), or a Ring, Brooch, Earrings or any other Jewel with Ciro Pearls. Put them beside any real pearls or any other artificial pearls, and if they are not equal to the real, or superior to the other artificial pearls, no matter what their price may be, we will refund your money if you return them to us within seven days.

Our new Booklet No. 10, just published, contains designs of all our jewels mounted with Ciro Pearls (sent post free).

Ciro Pearls

(Dept. 10), 39, OLD BOND ST., W.1 (Piccadilly End)

We have no shop. Our Showrooms are on the First Floor, over Lloyd's Bank.

A GASPER.

He gave me a light,
And our knuckles collided.
It was only polite,
The touch was so slight,
No need to take fright,
Which, in fact, was what I did.
He gave me a light,
And our knuckles collided.

His cheek turned quite pale,
While mine started blushing,
As with eloquence frail
He blurted his tale,
While an apt nightingale
In the garden was gushing.
His cheek turned quite pale,
While mine started blushing.

The gasper went out,
And the ash fell unheeded.
When there's no one about,
Desperation, no doubt,
Puts resistance to rout,
Which, in fact, was what he did—
The gasper went out,
And the ash fell unheeded.

Jessie Pope.



THE NEW RIVALRY.

URCHIN: Roller-skatin' 's a fine gime, ain't it, guvnah?

AN elderly lady awoke in the middle of the night to see a burglar ransacking her trinkets, which lay on the dressing-table. She did not scream, for she has always prided herself upon her courage, but, with a dramatic gesture, she pointed to the door, exclaiming:

"Leave me at once!"

Whereupon the burglar, who had retreated a step, responded politely:

"Excuse me, lady, but I had no intention of taking *you* with 'em."

EVEN the lift-boy has to draw the line somewhere. The maid who announced to the guest waiting at the door that she didn't hear her until she had rung three times has her match in a hotel lift-boy.

"If anyone calls, Henry, while I am out, tell him to wait. I shall be back directly," said the woman to the lift-boy.

There was no answer.

"Did you hear me? Why don't you answer?" asked the woman.

"I never answers, ma'am," he responded wearily, "unless I doesn't hear, and then I says 'What?'"

"DON'T write to the newspapers about things you do not understand," said the club sage. "Why not?" asked a younger member. "Because," replied the wise man, "if your letter is not printed, then you are offended with the editor. If it is printed, then your friends and enemies will say that you have become an ass, which is not true, because you were an ass long before you ever thought of writing to the newspapers."

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Shem-el-Nessim Regd

The Scent of Araby

has the blended fragrance of the rarest flowers of the Orient. It is **An Inspiration in Perfume,** delightfully refreshing.

5/3, 10/6, 21/-, 33/- and 63/- per bottle.



SHEM-EL-NESSIM FACE POWDER

Adherent and unobtrusive. Gives the complexion a wonderful softness and fragrant attractiveness.

10d. and **1/6** per box. Powder Leaf Books, **7½d.**

For a perfectly harmonious toilet use also:

Shem-el-Nessim Toilet Soap, **1/-** and **1/9** per tablet; Toilet Cream, **1/3**; Dental Cream, **1/4**; Bath Crystals, **3/6** and **6/3**; Hair Lotion, **10/-**; Toilet Water, **8/6**; Shampoo Powders, **3d.** each; Brilliantine (liquid) **2/6**, (solid) **1/4**; Talcum Powder, **1/4**; Sachets, **9d.**; Cachous, **6½d.**

Of all Chemists and Dealers in Perfumery, or from the Sole Makers—

J. GROSSMITH & SON, LTD.,

Distillers of Perfumes and Fine Soap Makers,

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Eczema is Blood Trouble

The true ***cause*** is poisonous acid in the blood. Remove the ***cause*** and you remove that itching rash.

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In colours, **42/-**. Two-colour Oilskin Hat with adjustable brim, Bute quality, **9/6**; Ladies' Rubber Wellingtons, warm lined, **21/-**.: all Post Free U.K.; extra Abroad.

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A SON of a certain distinguished mathematician has frequently evinced a disposition to follow in the footsteps of his eminent parent.

One day, glancing over a column of Tennyson's poems, he came upon the line :

"Half a league, half a league, half a league onward."

"Dad," asked the boy, "did Tennyson ever go to school ?"

"Why, of course, my son," replied the father. "What are you thinking of ?"

"I was thinking that he couldn't have learnt much arithmetic," rejoined the boy. "If he meant a league and a half, why didn't he say so ?"



TO GIVE AN IDEA.

"WHAT sort of a place is this Loneville where the Smithsons have gone to live ?"

"Well, there are about thirty-nine trains a day that don't stop there."

IN a certain garrison town there is a small green opposite the barracks, over which no one was for many years permitted to pass, save the General's cow ; and the sentries had particular orders to turn away anyone who ventured to cross the forbidden turf. One day a distinguished local lady, having called on the General's wife, bent her steps across the lawn, in order to make a short cut. She was stopped by the sentry calling out and ordering her to return and go by the other road. She remonstrated, but the man said he could not disobey his orders, which were to prevent anyone crossing that piece of ground. "But," said she, with a stately air, "do you know that I am Lady ——?" "I don't know who you be, ma'am," replied the immovable sentry, "but I knows who you b'ain't—you b'ain't the General's cow." After that she gave up the argument, and went the other way.

A CERTAIN famous violinist, after a recent concert in a small town, was asked by the manager of the theatre to recommend another violinist to play later in the season.

After he had recommended a distinguished violinist of whom he himself thought very highly, he received the following letter from the manager :

"The committee in charge of arranging the concerts has decided not to engage the artiste you suggested, for they say that if one artiste recommends another, then there must be something wrong with the artiste recommended."

IN legal documents, such as conveyances, wills, etc., it is usual for signatories, after writing their names, to add some words showing what they are, such as clerk, spinster, widow, and so on, and then their address. This is done in case it is subsequently necessary to trace them for reference purposes, as might easily happen in the case of a witness to a will. To ensure this being carried out properly, the solicitor who prepares the document usually pencils in (and afterwards erases) "name, description, address." And it is the word "description" that sometimes leads people astray. A solicitor tells how he was recently astonished and amused to find the following at the bottom of an agreement : "As witness the hand of the above-named . . . Elsie Saunders, *young, very attractive and pretty, fond of tennis and dancing, not yet engaged.*"

THE LADY K.C.

When Ermyntrude's arranged her wig
And donned her silken gown,
For judges she won't care a fig—
They'll quail beneath her frown.

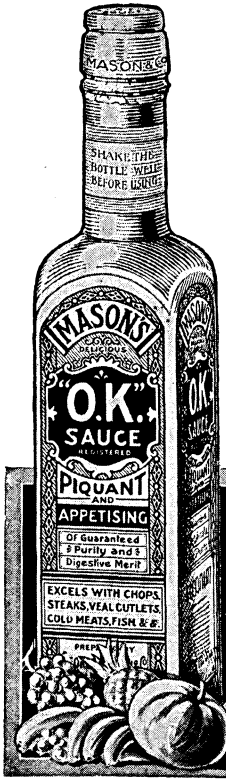
She'll waft a soft bewitching glance
To where the jury sit,
And they'll be ready in advance
Her client to acquit.

Although persuasive when she pleads,
Imagine, if you can,
Her callous joy when she proceeds
To cross-examine man!

The other counsel in the fight
May think the thing's absurd,
But perhaps she'll claim her woman's right
To have the final word.

For all this elegance and grace
She'll charge an awful fee,
But if you want to win your case,
Brief Ermyntrude, K.C.!

R. H. Roberts.





FRUITS and SPICES gathered from all parts of the world blended into a luscious and appetising sauce.

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BIRTHDAYS.

THERE are some things in life which give pleasure both to the young and to the very old, but which the middle-aged are apt to find tiresome. Birthdays are one of them.

"A constantly recurring insult." That is how an adult's birthday has been described by some penetrating mind. The description is more than ever true to-day, when youth governs the world, when freshness and vigour and the gay daring of inexperience have proved their value, and the young idea knows very well indeed how to shoot. In an age like this how can it be a matter for congratulation that a single day has scrapped another whole year of chances for a share in the plums of life? It is small comfort to be told you are "looking ten years younger" in the haphazard way in which some people throw the phrase about, meaning anything from a new hat to a touch of tan, or possibly the plump remains of a swollen face. In any case, to be told how young you are looking is, as everyone knows, a sure sign that you are beginning to grow elderly.

A transition state is proverbially uncomfortable. It is not only in adolescence that one has growing-pains, and it takes a phenomenally optimistic person to discover that each succeeding period of life as attained can prove the most interesting thus far.

"Lest we forget!" Has not this motto been countless times drummed into our patient ears as the prime reason for anniversaries? There was a drawing-room ballad much in vogue at the beginning of the century (a time, by the way, when birthdays—but never mind!) which was entitled "Let Us Forget!" For birthday anniversaries such would seem to me a suitable modification.

Oblivioni sacrum, as the cynic said on his own tombstone. Why can't we let our birthdays remain "sacred to oblivion"?

Elaine Nicholson.

AN African native with a record previously clean was arraigned before the British magistrate of his district for assault and battery.

"Why did you beat him?" questioned the magistrate.

"He called me sumpin'."

"What did he call you?"

"He called me a rhinoceros, sah, a rhinoceros!"

"A rhinoceros! When did this occur?"

"'Bout three years ago, sah."



LOCAL FAME

MUSICAL PERSON (after the village concert, to local vocalist): It's rather a pity you haven't had your voice trained. It's very good in quality, and you more control your breath than most amateurs.
OLD VILLAGER (interrupting): I should just think 'e 'ave, mister. Why, Oi've seen un drink a quart o' beer in one breath!

"Three years ago! Then how did it happen that you waited so long to resent it?"

"Because I ain't never seen no rhinoceros till dis mawnin'."

A DISADVANTAGE.

Lines on the crinoline fashion

Corinna in a crinoline
Was nightly seen at dance and play;
Her satisfaction then waxed thin,
For, when she wore it in the day,

And went to Remnant Sales galore,
She didn't get the least look in.
So *that* is why is seen no more
Corinna in a crinoline!

Leslie M. Oyler.



SOME OLD-FASHIONED BEAUTY RECIPES.

SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE.

By MIMOSA.

The Magnetism of Beautiful Hair.

BEAUTIFUL hair adds immensely to the personal magnetism of both men and women. Actresses and smart women are ever on the look-out for any harmless thing that will increase the natural beauty of their hair. The latest method is to use pure stallax as a shampoo on account of the peculiarly glossy, fluffy, and wavy effect which it leaves. As stallax has never been used much for this purpose, it comes to the chemist only in ¼ lb. sealed original packages, enough for twenty-five or thirty shampoos. A teaspoonful of the fragrant stallax granules, dissolved in a cup of hot water, is more than sufficient for each shampoo. It is very beneficial and stimulating to the hair, apart from its beautifying effect.

Permanently Removing Superfluous Hair.

HOW to permanently, not merely temporarily, remove a downy growth of disfiguring superfluous hair is what many women wish to know. It is a pity that it is not more generally known that pure powdered pheminol, obtainable from the chemist's, may be used for this purpose. It is applied directly to the objectionable hair. The recommended treatment not only instantly removes the hair, leaving no trace, but is designed also to kill the roots completely.

Don't Have Grey Hair.

GREY hair is often a serious handicap to both men and women while still in the prime of life. Hair dyes are not advisable because they are always obvious, inconvenient, and often downright injurious. Few people know that a very simple formula, which is easily made up at home, will turn the hair back to a natural colour in a perfectly harmless manner. You have only to get two ounces of tammalite concentrate from your chemist and mix it with three ounces of bay rum to prove this. Apply this simple and harmless lotion for a few nights to the hair with a small sponge, and the greyness will gradually disappear. The lotion is neither sticky nor greasy, and has been proved over and over again for generations past by those in possession of the formula.

To Have Smooth, White Skin, Free From Blemish.

DOES your skin chap or roughen easily, or become unduly red or blotchy? Let me tell you a quick and easy way to overcome the trouble and keep your complexion beautifully white, smooth, and soft. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at the chemist's, and use a little before retiring as you would use cold cream. The wax, through some peculiar action, flecks off the rough, discoloured, or blemished skin. The worn-out cuticle comes off just like dandruff on a diseased scalp, only in almost invisible particles. Mercolized wax simply hastens Nature's work, which is the rational and proper way to obtain a perfect complexion, so much sought after, but very seldom seen. The process is perfectly simple and quite harmless.

Blackheads Fly Away.

A PRACTICALLY instantaneous remedy for blackheads, greasy skins, and enlarged pores, recently discovered, is now coming into general use in the boudoir. It is very simple, harmless, and pleasant. Drop a stymol tablet, obtained at the chemist's, in a tumbler full of hot water. After the effervescence has subsided, bathe the face in the liquid, using a small sponge or soft cloth. In a few minutes dry the face, and the offensive blackheads will come right off on the towel. Also the large oily pores immediately close up and efface themselves naturally. The greasiness disappears and the skin is left smooth, soft, and cool. This simple treatment is then repeated a few times at intervals of four or five days to ensure a permanence of the result.

THE EXTRA BIT.

OLD Mr. Johnson, who may be seen any evening watering his nasturtiums in the front garden of "Chatsworth," settled in our humble suburb many years ago, and at the time he purchased his villa was persuaded to buy the adjoining vacant plot, thenceforth to be known as "the extra bit." Indeed, it was this access of territory which suggested the name of the residence, and fired its owner with an unholy pride which he has never been able to live down.

It is no use trying to sell Johnson tickets for whist drives and concerts. "All right for people with plenty of leisure on their hands," he says, "but when you've got an extra bit of ground, it takes you all your time to keep even with it."

Every member of his family is imbued with the virus. Mrs. Johnson lifts up her voice in



CAUSE AND EFFECT.

VISITOR (an engineer): Have you any theory as to the cause of these floods?
INHABITANT: Oh, yes.
VISITOR: Well, what do you think it is?
INHABITANT (resignedly): Oh, water—just water.

the butcher's and the grocer's and says, "Send it home, please; 'Chatsworth'—you know, the house with the extra bit at the side"; and his children invariably emerge triumphant from all verbal recriminations with "Yah! Your father ain't got an extra bit of ground."

On hearing that the Prince of Wales had moved into St. James's Palace, Mr. Johnson remarked: "It's a pity that neighbourhood is so much built on; he won't be able to get an extra bit like I did when I came here."

When, to the general consternation, a board appeared on the sacred territory, announcing "This eligible building plot for sale," it was felt that some explanation was due from Johnson. He gave it to an informal deputation at the front gate at the conclusion of the irrigation of the nasturtiums. "Well," he said, "what with the Duke blowing up his glass-houses and selling the old place in Piccadilly, and one thing and another, I seem to have lost interest, somehow, in the extra bit."



ILLOGICAL.

The cost of living swells apace,
And still it brings me cheer
To know the maiden of my heart
Continues just as dear.

Yet if we marry later on,
It well may make me pensive
When I discover that my wife
Is no whit less expensive.



A SOLITARY traveller, who was attacked by three ruffians who thought he was worth robbing, resisted them with considerable courage and skill, but was overcome, and had to submit to having his pockets ransacked. His resistance had encouraged the idea that he carried money worth the attack, but the robbers found that he had only twopence in his possession. "What an amazing fellow!" said one to the others, on realising that this was the extent of their plunder. "If he had had sixpence on him, I suppose he would have murdered the whole lot of us!"



Two soldiers had waited for many days for letters that did not come. Finally one of them did receive a letter. He opened it in the presence of the other, who watched him enviously. In the envelope there was nothing but a sheet of writing-paper, blank on both sides. The one who had received no letter observed:

"Well, you haven't scored anything this time. That's not a letter."

"Yes, it is," the other asserted. "It's a letter from my wife. We're not on speaking terms just at present."



TIME WAS . . . .

Time was when poets seemed to me
Unpractical to a degree—
All discontented with their lot,
Yearning to be what they were not.
For instance, once it seemed absurd
To want to be a bee or bird.

Now times have changed, I think I see
Some sense in being a bird or bee.
To build his home is birdie's joy;
He need no bricklayer employ.
Now I myself a dwelling lack,
I'd be a *snail*, with house on back.

Jess Dorynne.

FEB 3 1921

THE WINDSOR

February



WARD·LOCK
& CO·LIMITED
LONDON &

All that a pen should be!



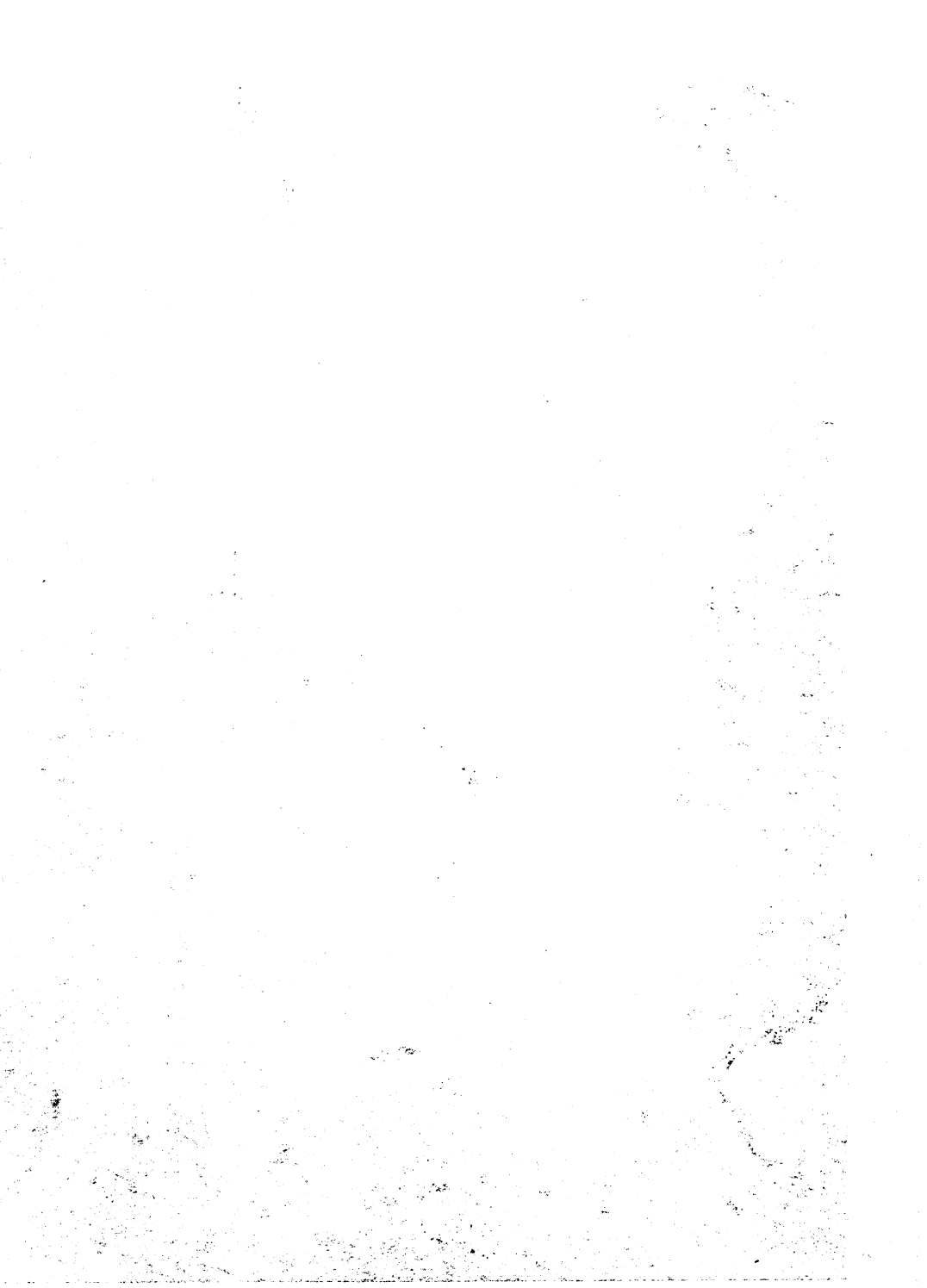
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London Branches: 79 & 80, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1; 97, CHEAPSIDE, E.C.2;
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PARIS, BRUSSELS, ZURICH, SYDNEY, CAPE TOWN, TORONTO.





A LITTLE CANADIAN WOOD NYMPH.

By Gertrude des Clayes.

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"Lyveden gathered him gently into his arms and let him lick his face."

IN THE SECOND PLACE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne" and "The Courts of Idleness."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

MAJOR ANTHONY LYVEDEN, D.S.O., looked out of the attic window in Eaton Square with his pen in his mouth. After a moment's reflection he returned to his letter, added a sentence or two, and signed his name. Then he restored its cork to his bottle of ink, blotted the lines he had written, and, gathering the flimsy pages into his hand, leaned back in his loose-limbed chair with the consideration which that exacting skeleton required of its patrons, and proceeded to read.

This, then, is our chance; and, since Lyveden will be none the wiser, let us forget our manners and look over his shoulder.

Dear Toby,

By extracting a promise that I would write to you, you did me a good turn, for, while my first report was rendered from a sense of duty, I am making this one with a sense of relief—

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a somewhat scandalous admission. Of course a really good footman would keep his mouth shut. But then I am but an indifferent lackey.

To say that I left my first place would be untrue. In fact, the place left me—rather tragically, as it happened: which reminds me that I must withdraw anything which I have written to you in disparagement of my late master. The poor man had worries I did not know of, and behaved to me very handsomely at the last, remembering that I might have troubles, when he could not think straight, so sore were his own.

For a week, then, I became a country gentleman, living with my dog at a little inn where no ways met. By the end of that time I had got me another place.

Yes, sir, I am in the service of the Marquess of Banff, sir. There are times when I go powdered. I have even hobnobbed with the scarlet livery of Royalty. I am, I assure you, a very deuce of a fellow.

With the Marquess, who resembles an irritable baboon, I have little to do. The Marchioness — a strong woman — is also, mercifully, too much engaged upon works of supererogation, which, in a rich bass, she styles "her manifold duties," to observe my existence. Lord Pomfret Fresne, however, a gilded youth with three thousand a year, finds me extremely useful. I bet for him, I make appointments for him to have his hair trimmed, I retain stalls for him, and occasionally I admit him to the house at an unlawful hour. In fact, he is a confounded nuisance. He is impertinent, grossly ignorant, and a niggard. Moreover, Toby, he hath an eye whose like I have seen before—once. Then it was set in the head of a remount which, after it had broken a shoeing-smith's leg, was cast for vice at Kantara in 1917.

"Lyveden," says he one day, "you're a gentleman, aren't you?"

It seemed easiest to say "Yes."

"Why?" says his lordship.

"It's a family failing," said I.

"How beastly! You mean, like drink?"

"Exactly, my lord. We never mention it."

"No, don't," says he. "My mother's very hot on that sort of thing. Hullo!" He peers into a gold cigarette-case. "I had four pounds in here. I'll swear I had."

Considering that I had found the case in the library, and had restored it to him five minutes before, his ejaculation was not in the best of taste. His lordship, however, must whet his point upon the grindstone of insult.

"You're not hard up, are you?" says he.

"I can pay my way, my lord."

"Well, I know there was four pounds there, because—— No. Wait a minute. It's all right. I remember I put it in my coat. Which reminds me—I want a couple of stalls at Daly's. You might ring up and get them. How much is the pit?"

"I'm not quite sure, my lord. It used to be half-a-crown."

"Half-a-crown!" cries he. "I thought it was a shilling."

"That's the gallery, my lord."

"Oh, yes. Well, I can't afford the pit, Lyveden, but you can go to the gallery if you like," and he produces a shilling.

I shake my head.

"I'm much obliged to your lordship, but I seldom go out."

"Right oh," he says, with ill-concealed relief. "Don't forget those stalls."

It is pathetic, Toby, but it is true. And when I was at Harrow, his eldest brother, who is one of the best, was my fag.

When I say that, compared with the butler, Respectability itself seems raffish, you will understand. He is a monument, massive, meaningless, and about as useful as a fan in a cyclone. Yet the household revolves about him. He came in, I fancy, with the spittoon . . .

Did I tell you that I rejoiced in a dog—a little Sealyham? Who lives in the country, where I visit him once a week? For a year we were never apart, and I miss him terribly. His joie de vivre *is infectious. Besides, he understands. You will be saying that I revolve about him. I confess it readily. But then he is not a monument.*

And now I will show you that the cassock of the confessor has indeed fallen on your shoulders.

Listen. I have been disdained—given the cold shoulder. Such a beautiful shoulder, Toby. Such a shoulder as Artemis presented to Actæon. But there was good reason for that. It fell on this wise. I sat in a garden and mufti and looked at an aged doorway, thinking how fair a frame it would make. And when next I looked, lo! there was the picture, all warm and smiling, her little white hands about her dark, dark hair. I was overwhelmed. I would have slain dragons, levelled castles, broken the backs of knights for her sake. But before I was given the chance, I was given the shoulder. Now mark how a malicious Fate maketh a mock of me. But three days later I run full tilt into my lady, I, the same Anthony Lyveden—but with my livery on. In case that should not be enough, I presently return to the inn, to learn that I

have missed her by forty-eight hours. Veux-tu m'en croire ?

Beneath the unfair strain my poor vocabulary broke down. Indeed, I soon had no alternative but to repeat myself, thus violating what I know to be one of your most sacred rules.

Assez, j'en finis.

You are so distant, and it will be so long before this letter reaches you, that it requires an effort steadily to regard you as a confidant. Already that impression of you is fainter than it was when I picked up my pen. A reply from you, Toby, would do much to revive it—would, in fact, turn into substance the shadow with which I am, rather desperately, cheating my common-sense.

A toi, mon beau,
Anthony Lyveden.

Having addressed this letter to Australia, Lyveden made the best of an enamelled basin and a mirror, which was not quite so good as one which, once upon a time, his servant had purchased in Port Said for five piastres. Then he put on his very expensive plum-coloured coat and descended twelve flights of stairs.

Five minutes later he opened the front door, confessed to an irreverent gentleman in blue and yellow that " Ole Flat-feet " was at home, and, after conducting them to the first floor, ushered " The Honourable Mrs. George Wrangle, Miss Wrangle, Miss Sarah Wrangle," into the presence itself. With a contempt for tradition, the Marchioness not only extended to each of the ladies her large right hand, but withheld no one of its fingers.

The identity of the guests was then communicated to the butler, whose supervision of the service of tea depended upon the visitor's position in the table of precedence. That of Mrs. Wrangle, apparently, fell dismally short of the standard which the great man imposed, for, upon hearing her name, he stared indignantly upon a cat which was cleaning itself upon the hearth of his parlour, and then resumed the perusal of *The Morning Advertiser* in contemptuous silence.

Without more ado, Anthony repaired to the pantry. Five minutes later he and the second footman took up the tea.

" Is Lord Pomfret in ? " said the Marchioness.

" I will see, my lady," said Lyveden.

" Desire him to come in to tea."

" Very good, my lady."

Lord Pomfret had just returned from a luncheon-party, and was preparing to attend a *thé dansant.* His mother's command was abusively received. At length—

" Tell her I'm out, Lyveden."

Anthony hesitated.

" Her ladyship was very definite, my lord."

" D'you hear what I say ? "

" Very good, my lord."

The scepticism with which his mistress received Anthony's report was distressingly obvious. Also the faces of Mrs. and Miss Wrangle fell noticeably. Indeed, the bell which summoned Lyveden to speed their departure rang but a few minutes later.

As they descended the stairs, Lord Pomfret emerged from the library, cramming cigarettes into his case with the dishevelling manipulation of the belated swain.

The encounter was not a success.

Reason suggested to Mrs. Wrangle that the episode could be far more effectively dealt with if and when the offender became her son-in-law. Impulse, however,clamoured for immediate and appropriate action. Between the two stools her display of emotion fell flat. As for Pomfret, the knowledge that he had just induced the lady's footman to go for a taxi did not contribute to his peace of mind, and his manners became conspicuously devoid of that easy grace which should have gone with his title.

After the mechanical issue and acknowledgment of a few ghastly pleasantries, Lord Pomfret muttered something about " hearing his mother calling," and fled with precipitate irrelevance in the direction of the back stairs, leaving Mrs. Wrangle speechless with indignation and bitterly repenting her recent indecision. She swept past Anthony as if she were leaving a charnel-house. Her daughters, who took after their father, walked as though they were being expelled . . .

When their mother found herself confronted with the choice of leaving without her footman or awaiting that gentleman's successful return from the mission upon which he had been dispatched, it required their united diplomacy to deter her from there and then returning to lay the outrageous facts before Lady Banff.

Mrs. Wrangle's complaint, however, was posted that evening.

By the time it arrived, Lord Pomfret had prepared his defence. This he conducted so skilfully that the Marchioness, who believed in red justice, sent for Lyveden

and told him two things. The first was that in future, when she sent him for anyone, he would be good enough to look for them before returning to say they were out. The second was that when he was told to fetch a cab, he would be good enough to do so, instead of persuading other people's servants to do his work. Lord Pomfret, who was present at the arraignment, supported his mother dutifully. Anthony said nothing at all. Four and a half years in the Army had left their mark.

* * * * *

If Lyveden was a Conservative, so was his dog. For the two there was only one walk in all Hertfordshire, and that, after six fair miles, brought them thirsty or wet, as the weather might order, to the shade or shelter of "The Leather Bottel." This was, in fact, Anthony's country house. Here for one glorious week the two had shared the same bed. Heaven only knew when such a prolonged visit would be repeated. It had cost two whole pounds, and, do what he would, Anthony could save very little out of his wages. Of his six pounds a month the Dogs' Home took four precious guineas. Then there were railway fares at three shillings a time—twelve shillings a month. Teas, clothes, and a little—a very little—tobacco had to be paid for. It was a tight fit.

With his back to a beech tree, Lyveden thought upon these things. The weather, perhaps, invited Melancholy.

Without the wood a sudden shower was falling down from heaven, drenching anew wet pastures, thinning the mud upon brown lanes, poppling upon the washed highway. Dainty scale-armour of a million leaves protected Anthony. Ere this was penetrated, the fusillade would have stopped.

It was more than a month now since he had seen the lady. At the moment he supposed gloomily that she had gone out of his life. Considering what his life was, it was just as well. (Melancholy smiled to herself, sighed sympathetically, and laid her dark head upon Anthony's shoulder.) His thoughts flew over the blowing country to Eaton Square. The squalor of his bedroom rose up before him. The walls were peeling, and upon one there was a vast brown stain. The floor was bare. The cracked American cloth upon the chest of drawers made this a washstand. The fact that the *ensemble* had lost a foot made it unsteady. True, someone had placed a Bradshaw under the bereaved corner, but the piece listed heavily. The Bradshaw, by the way, was out of date. In fact, its value as a guide to intending passengers had expired on the thirty-first of October, 1902. That looked as if the chest were an antique. Three of the china knobs, however, which served as handles were unhappily missing. Then there was a flap beneath the window which, when raised, arrested the progress of such smuts as failed to clear it in their descent to the boards. (Melancholy smothered a laugh and laid a wet cheek against her victim's.) The smuts were devilish—the terror by night, the arrow that flieth by day. Anthony believed in fresh air. Also he believed in cleanliness. His twofold faith cost his convenience dear. He had begged a dust-sheet from the housekeeper, with which to cover his bed during the day, and regularly, before retiring, shook an ounce of soot out of his window. The bed, by the way, was overhung by the wall, which, for some reason best known to those who built it, deserted the perpendicular for an angle of forty-five, three inches from Anthony's nose. The candlestick had seen merrier days: that there might be no doubt about the matter, it said as much, announcing in so many words that it was "A Present from Margate" . . .

Scaramouche Melancholy fairly squirmed with delight. Then she turned upon Anthony eyes swimming with tenderness, put up consoling lips . . . The entrance of Polichinelle, however, cudgel and all, in the shape of a little white dog, dragging a bough with him, spoiled her game. Harlequin Sun, too, flashed out of hiding—before his cue, really, for the shower was not spent.

Scaramouche fled with a snarl.

At Polichinelle's obvious request, Anthony seized the spare end of the bough, and the two tugged with a will—an agreeable tourney, which was always eventually settled in the lists of Frolic itself. And, whiles they strove, Harlequin danced in and out the trees, with magic touch of bat making the mizzle shimmer and the meadows gleam, and finally, with rare exuberance, breaking his precious colours overhead, to say the masque was over and bid the racing winds hustle away the fretful scenery and clear the stage of sky for his possession.

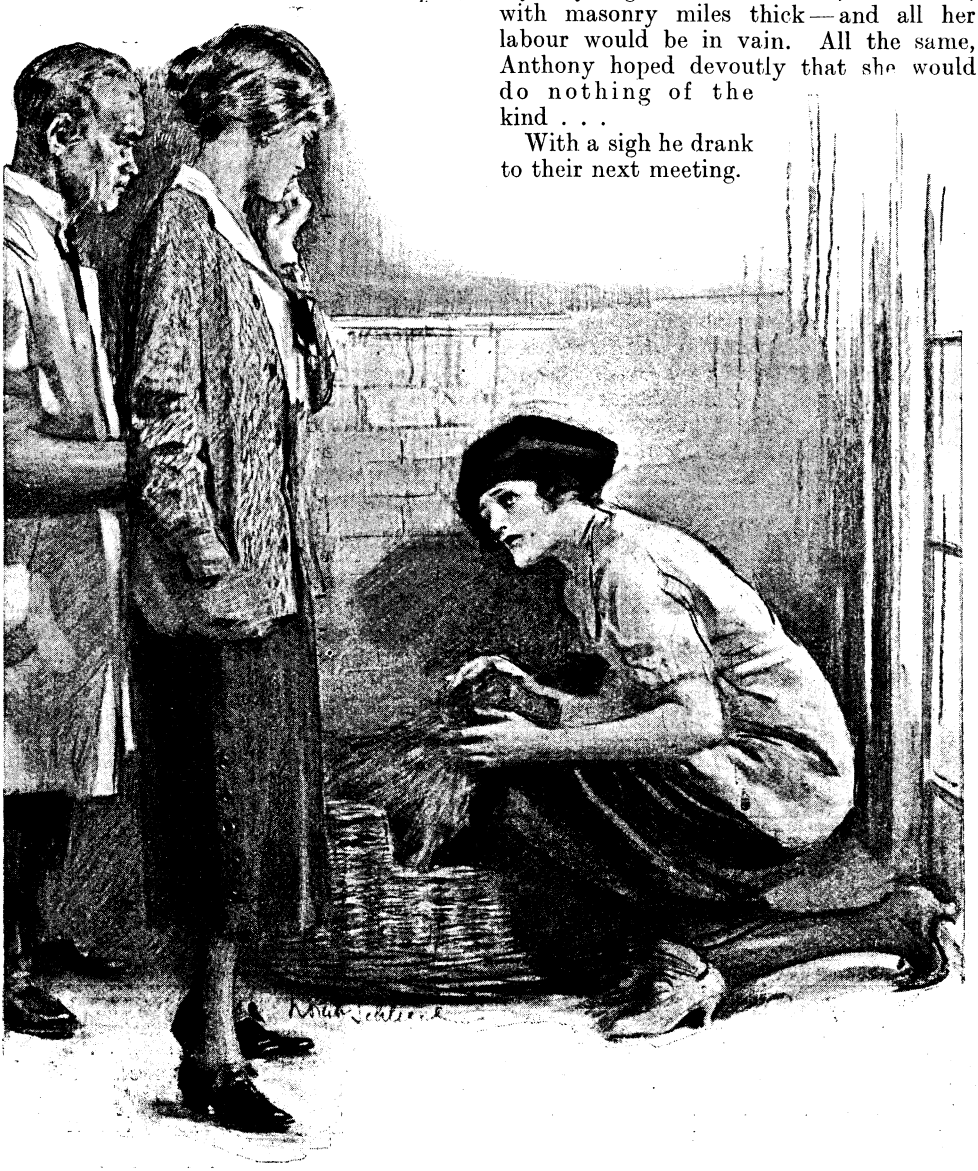
Master and dog made their way to the inn jubilantly enough.

As he devoured his tea, Lyveden thought again of the girl—more cheerfully. Indeed, he made bold to decide that she was interested in him. That such interest sprang

from the loins of Curiosity he admitted readily. Its origin did not matter; the trouble was to keep it alive.

It is obvious that he himself was more than interested. He was, I suppose, in love. At the moment when he had looked upon her for the first time his heart had leaped. Instantly the man knew that he had seen his maid. He had no doubt of it at all, but was quite positive. If a million Archangels had appeared and with one voice told him that he was wrong, he would have shaken his head with a smile. His heart had leaped, and there was an end of it. He just *knew*. In view of the prospective failure of so many Archangels, it is not surprising that my lady herself, whatever she did, would not be able to erase this impression. Consequently, though she had behaved to his face with a manner which it was a Quixotic courtesy to style "disdain," Anthony never wavered. For a second of time he had seen beyond the veil—at least, his heart had—and, now that he knew what it hid, all reinforcement of that veil was out of date. My lady might line it with oak, with brass, with masonry miles thick—and all her labour would be in vain. All the same, Anthony hoped devoutly that she would do nothing of the kind . . .

With a sigh he drank to their next meeting.



"Valerie caressed her favourite and turned to a grey-headed kennel-man who had just entered the room."

Then he called the terrier and set him upon his knee.

"My fellow," said he, "listen. Upon these very precincts you committed an aggravated assault upon an Irish terrier. I don't blame you. He probably deserved it. But—he belongs to the lady. My lady, Patch, the only lady in the world. And she didn't like it, my boy. She didn't like it at all. So remember, if ever we meet her again, you mustn't fight. I don't want to be hard on you, but you just mustn't. Of course, if you could show him a little courtesy—indicate a scent which will repay investigation, or something—I should be exalted. But I don't press that. A strictly non-committal attitude will serve. But aggression—no. Patch, I trust you. I know it's difficult for you to understand, but you'll be a good dog and try, won't you? For my sake, Patch?"

Whether the Sealyham in fact appreciated the nature and gravity of the request is a matter which cannot be decided upon this side of the grave. The fact remains that when, upon entering the grounds of the Dogs' Home some thirty-five minutes later, he encountered that very Irish terrier, looking rather sorry for himself and attached to the end of a long lead, he walked straight up to him and bestowed upon him as generous a greeting as his nostrils and tail could convey.

Anthony could hardly believe his eyes . . .

At the other end of the lead was a kennelman, who spoke quickly and to the point.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir, but I wouldn't let 'im talk to 'im. 'E's not very grand—this little dog ain't. I think it's only a chill, but we've hisolated 'im, in case . . ."

Patch was summoned peremptorily, to come running wide-eyed. Happily in his sight his master could do no wrong; otherwise it is possible that he might have thought himself hardly used and love's labour lost indeed.

Anthony passed into the hall, thinking furiously.

With Patch under his arm, he spoke to the fair-haired girl in charge of the office.

"I've seen a dog out there that I recognise—an Irish terrier. He's not very well, your man said. May I know whose he is?"

"Oh, yes. He belongs to Miss French—Miss Valerie French. He's a nice little dog, isn't he?"

If Anthony Lyveden had reflected, it would have occurred to him that his informant had been, as they say, "very quick in the uptake." The truth was that less than a week ago Miss Valerie French had recognised Patch and had asked the same girl for the name of his owner.

"He's a beauty," said Anthony. "Does she keep him here all the time?"

"When she's in London," said the girl. "I expect you've seen her. She's very often down."

Anthony nodded.

"I think I must have," he said.

Then he made much of Patch and handed him over.

"See you next week, little Patch. Next Saturday. Only a week from to-day. Goodbye, little fellow."

He ruffled the tousled head with a last caress, smiled at the puzzled brown eyes, and turned away . .

There was no sweet sorrow about these partings. They were purely abominable.

At the very hour that Lyveden walked heavily down the wet lanes on his way to the station, Valerie French, who was to dine early and go to the play, was sitting before her dressing-table in an apricot kimono.

The evening sun stared into her bedroom mercilessly, and found no fault in it. It was a broad low room, full of soft colours and the warm glow of highly polished wood. Walls, curtains, and carpet were all of powder-blue: an old-rose fabric covered what seats there were; an apple-green coverlet filled up the symphony. That taper elegance which modern craftsmanship can give mahogany was most apparent, lending the usual suite unusual comeliness. A great pier-glass flashed in a corner, upon a little table beside a deep chair a bowl of roses sweetened the London air, above the well-found bed dangled an ivory switch.

If the chamber was fair, so was my lady.

Looking upon her beauty, as she sat at the glass, Valerie French might have felt very proud. But, if we pry into her mind, it will be seen that her thoughts were otherwise occupied. Indeed, the fixing of her hair—usually so simple a matter—was making her knit her brow. The fact that the soft dark tresses had been washed that morning made them unruly. In vain the pointed fingers strove to secure and order them to their mistress's liking . . .

At length, with a sigh, she brought her hands to her lap.

Then she made a *moue* at the reflection of her labours.

"I look like his Sealyham," she said.

It was on Monday morning that Lord Pomfret suggested to Lyveden the propriety of putting a pound each way on Slip Along.

"I don't suppose the swine's any good," said his lordship moodily. "But he'll probably start at twenty, so I may as well have a dart. I forget who told me about him."

"Very good, my lord," said Anthony.

To receive this commission, he had been summoned from the drawing-room, whose floor he was engaged in leathering to the requisite degree of lustre. He had had to remove an apron, turn down his sleeves, and put on his plum-coloured coat. So soon as his lordship, who was yet at breakfast, released him, he would reverse the procedure and return to his floor.

Lord Pomfret peered muttering into his cigarette case. Then he plucked out a ten-shilling note and flicked it across the table-cloth.

"That's all I appear to have," he said sulkily. "I'll have to owe you the thirty shillings."

Anthony braced himself.

"I'm afraid I haven't any money at all, my lord."

The other loooked up sharply.

"What? . . . Oh, nonsense, Lyveden."

Anthony said nothing. He was not anxious to repeat the lie, but he was determined not to lend to Lord Pomfret. That the loan would lose itself was much too probable, and the construction of his slender resources would not stand such a strain.

"Of course you've got thirty shillings. But you don't like parting." Lord Pomfret laughed rather nastily. "I'll pay you back, man, if that's your trouble."

"I haven't the money, my lord."

The youth stared at Anthony furiously. Then—

"Oh, go to hell!" he said thickly.

Anthony picked up the note and placed it beside his lordship. Then he left the room and returned to his work.

Lord Pomfret was exceedingly wrath. In fact, he brooded over the incident. This augured ill for Anthony. The cold fact that in due season—to be precise, at eleven minutes to four that same afternoon—Slip Along won his race easily did not improve matters. That he started at thirty-three to one was still less digestible . . .

When his lordship read the news at half-past five, he broke into a cold sweat. Then he bit savagely at the nail of his favourite thumb. Considering that, so recently as that morning, he had reluctantly decided that that toothsome *entremet* must be allowed to go unmolested for at least a week, his action was indicative of an emotion which knew no rules. That he made no mention of the matter to Anthony was the ugliest omen of all.

Two days later the second footman called Anthony, who was crossing the hall.

It was a fine July morning, and the famous square was full of sunlight and clear-cut shadows and the soft swish of leaves. All this could be marked from the hall, for the front door stood wide open, and a fresh cool breeze came floating into the mansion, to flirt with the high and mighty curtains upon the landing, jostle the stately palms, and ruffle up the pompous atmosphere with gay irreverence. The air itself would have told you the hour. The intermittent knocks of a retreating postman declared the time even more accurately.

"'Ere's a letter fer you, mate," said the second footman. "'A. Leyveden, Esquire,' it says, all bald-like. No C.M.G., no B.F., no nothin'. I should 'ave a raow abaout this."

Anthony came grinning.

"P'r'aps their *Who's Who*'s out of date," he said.

The other shook his head.

"It's the deecay of menners, mate," he said sorrowfully, turning to resume the sorting operation upon which he was engaged.

The letter bore the postmark of a village in Hertfordshire, and proved to be a communication from the Dogs' Home at which Patch was lodged.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to inform you that your Sealyham has contracted distemper. There is at present no reason to think that he will be seriously ill, and the veterinary surgeon is quite satisfied with his condition.

Yours faithfully,
N. Dawes,
Supt.

Anthony stared at the sheet as it had been a death-warrant. It must be remembered that Patch was all that he had in the world.

The second footman, who had been perusing a postcard addressed to the Marchioness, placed the missive upon the top of his mistress's letters and fell to whistling softly between his teeth. When he glanced

round to see Anthony standing so still, he stopped his fluting in the midst of a bar.

"Wot's up, mate?" he said eagerly. "'Ad some bad noos?"

Anthony folded the sheet and put a hand to his head.

"My little dog's ill," he said. "He's down in the country, and—it's rather worrying."

The other looked at him curiously. Then—

"That's the worst o' dawgs," he said sagely. "Yer goes an' gets fon' of 'em, an' then they gets run over, or dies, or somethin'. Cats is the same. My sister's little gurl 'ad a kitten with one eye. Thort the world o' that cat, she did. 'Adn't got no use fer dolls nor nothin'. 'Moses,' she called it. One day a bull-terrier does it in." He paused dramatically, raising his eyes to heaven with an air of reminiscent resignation which spoke volumes. "Me sister thort the kid 'd go aout of 'er mine. In the en' they 'ad to send 'er away."

Anthony listened to the anecdote with what politeness he could, hoping desperately that time would prove its irrelevance.

"Poor little girl," he said quietly.

"But she got over it orright, mate. Same as wot you will. You see. 'Sides," he added, with the gesture of one who adduces a still stronger argument, "'e ain't dead yet. Don't you meet trouble 'alf-way, mate. It ain't good enough."

For this philosophy there was much to be said, and Anthony did his best to practise it. When he had sent a telegram, asking to be informed daily of his dog's progress, and advised by wire or telephone if there was any danger, he felt more comfortable. The day, however, dragged heavily . . .

Happily Lord Pomfret made few demands upon his patience. For all that, his lordship had formed a new habit, which Anthony — partly because he was preoccupied, partly because he had but two eyes—failed to observe. This was a pity, for while it was not a pretty habit, it happened to concern Anthony pretty closely. The trick was this. So often as he and Lyveden were in the same room, his lordship's watery eyes would follow the footman wheresoever he moved.

It may be urged that a cat may look at a king. True. But if a cat were detected in the act of looking at a king as Lord Pomfret Fresne had come to look at Anthony Lyveden, it is safe to predict not only that the animal would be afforded no further opportunity of inspecting his majesty, but that in about two minutes he would, like poor Moses, be put to sleep with his fathers.

* * * * *

By the same post which so discomfited Anthony, came to Miss Valerie French two letters, one at least of which must be set out.

c/o John Bumble, Esq.,
The Shrubbery,
Hawthorne.

Dear Val,

Send your pal along. The Bumbles will jump at him. As for us, if our present colleague wasn't under notice to leave, we should be. Of course he can have his dog here. Haven't I got José? And if a parlour-maid can keep one, d'autant plus *a footman. Pending the dismissal of the colleague referred to, Anne and I have to do more than we should, and are a little bored with Life. George has the best time with the car, but we make him help in the house. When are you coming to Bell Hammer? George and I were there on Sunday, and it looks topping.*

Love from us all,
Betty.

The other dispatch was from Printing House Square. Its envelope, being opened, was found to contain three other envelopes, each bearing the same superscription, viz., "Box Y 779, c/o *The Times*."

Valerie opened them eagerly.

They were, all three, applications for the post of a gentleman-footman.

After satisfying herself that no one of these was signed by Lyveden, Valerie tossed them aside unread. Then she propped herself on her elbow and poured out a cup of tea.

That Fate buffets her favourites is sometimes true. Here we catch the baggage red-handed. With one cold relentless palm she threatens to take from Anthony, who hath not, even that which he hath: with the other she is strawing blossoms upon what is to be his path. With her right hand she robs the beggar, with the left she prepares for him a bed of roses.

The lady of Anthony's heart loved him. It is no good beating about the bush. Pity may be akin to Love, but Interest is the boy's first cousin. Whether her heart had leaped, when she saw him, is not for me to say. She looked upon him, saw that he was good, made up her mind—and that was settled. The fact that she immediately turned her back upon him has nothing to

do with the question, but may, if you please, be construed as confirming her plight.

Had the round world been ten thousand years younger, when she and Anthony looked the one upon the other in the garden of "The Leather Bottel," he would have put his arms about her, and she would have suffered him, and there in the shadow of the little inn this tale would have come to an end. That it did not so end then and there is the fault partly of a crop of conventions, which have in so many years increased out of all belief and now stand bristling between Impulse and Action, and partly of the contrariness of women, which is, we know, very ancient, but not so old as all that. It is these two marplots, which you must bless or curse, gentlemen, as the fancy takes you.

Valerie French, then, was trying to bring Lyveden into smooth water. She had already earmarked a congenial billet at The Shrubbery, Hawthorne. The difficulty was to make Anthony apply for the post. Since Mrs. Bumble could hardly be advised to ask a footman to quit the service of the Marquess of Banff, Valerie, who was determined to remain incognito, had recourse to the Press. Her advertisement for a gentleman-footman appeared daily.

When my lady had drunk her tea, she reached for the telephone. After a little delay, she was connected to the Dogs' Home in Hertfordshire. Presently the superintendent spoke . . .

"Miss French's Irish terrier was not too grand. He was coughing a little. There was no real cause for anxiety, but he was not out of the wood."

"I'll be down this afternoon," said Valerie.

She was as good as her word.

And since, to her grief, the little brown dog was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, she visited him the next day also and the day after that.

And so it happened that she was at the Home on Friday, when Patch's condition gave rise to such uneasiness as presently decided the superintendent to telephone to his master. Indeed, the fair-haired girl had discussed with Valerie the advisability of so doing.

"Mr. Lyveden's a busy man, I fancy, and we hate worrying people. But he's simply devoted to the dog, and he's pretty bad."

"I think," said Valerie slowly, "I think he ought to be told."

"Perhaps you're right, Miss French," said the girl. "I'll go and ring up."

She slipped out of the hospital, through the garden, and presently into her office.

It was perhaps ten minutes before she could speak with London. Then—

"Is that Lord Banff's house?" she inquired.

"Yes. Who are you?" said an unpleasant voice.

"Oh, can I speak to Mr. Lyveden?"

"*Who?*"

"Mr. Lyveden."

An exclamation of surprise came to her ears . . . Then an oath . . . Then a smothered laugh . . .

The girl frowned with impatience. At length—

"Hullo," said the voice.

"Can I speak to Mr. Lyveden?" she repeated.

"No, you can't. He's—he's out."

"Oh! Well, it's rather important. Could you give him a message?"

"Try me," said the voice.

"Will you tell him that his dog is not so well?"

"What dog?"

"*His* dog. His Sealyham. Mr. Lyveden will understand."

"Oh, will he?" said the voice. "And where do I come in, Mabel?"

For a moment the fair-haired girl stared at the instrument. Then she flushed angrily and rang off . . .

At the other end of the line Lord Pomfret replaced his receiver with a hideous leer.

The superintendent returned to the hospital.

"Did you speak to him?" said Valerie.

"No, Miss French. He was out. I had to leave a message."

Valerie rose to her feet.

Observing her movement, the Irish terrier rose also and got shakily upon his legs. The effort set him coughing again, poor fellow, and he had to submit to the paroxysm before he could wag his tail. How stiffly this moved, his mistress, whose eyes were full of tears, did not remark. Nor did she notice the suggestion of impotence about his hindquarters. With her practised eye, the fair-haired girl noticed both symptoms and bit her lip.

Valerie caressed her favourite and turned to a grey-headed kennel-man who had just entered the room.

"Are you going to wash his face?"

"Yes, ma'am."

The Irish terrier was plainly pleased to see his old nurse.

"How is the little Sealyham?"

"'Tis a sick dog, ma'am."

Valerie turned away.

The superintendent escorted her back to the house.

"I'll be down to-morrow morning," she said.

"Very well, Miss French."

As she walked down the drive, Valerie wondered miserably whether she was treading it for almost the last time.

* * * * *

When upon Saturday morning Anthony received no bulletin from Hertfordshire, he did not know what to think. In the ordinary way he would have telegraphed, but telegrams cost money, which he really could not afford, and he was, in any event, to visit the Dogs' Home that afternoon . . . He decided to do nothing. All the same, he was far from easy, for Friday morning's report had said that his terrier was not so well.

He went about his work abstractedly, glancing at the faces of the clocks times without number.

At five-and-twenty minutes past two, just as he was going to change, Lord Pomfret sent for him. Anthony ground his teeth. The man was his evil genius.

Mercifully the interview was a short one.

His lordship produced two pounds and curtly instructed the footman to expend the money upon the purchase of roses.

"They've got to be good ones, and you ought to be able to get stacks for two quid. I shan't want them till to-morrow morning, so they've got to be fresh. You'd better get them as late as you can, and put them in water directly you get in. That's all."

"Very good, my lord."

Lord Pomfret returned to the perusal of *La Vie*, and Anthony stepped to the door. As he was passing out—

"Lyveden," said his lordship sharply.

"Yes, my lord."

"I shall want to see the bill."

Anthony hesitated, inwardly raging. Then—

"Very good, my lord," he said huskily.

Ten minutes later he was out of the house.

Along the road of Life goes bowling the coach of Destiny, and we poor passengers inside know neither whither we are being borne nor how long shall be our journey. Now and again the horses are pulled up, the door is opened, that grim guard Fate calls out a name, and one of us climbs pitifully forth, to pass with faltering steps into a sable hostelry. We that are left behind peer after him curiously . . . Then the door is slammed, with a lurch the coach is off again on its eternal wayfaring, and we poor passengers inside sit betwixt hope and fear, wondering vainly what the next mile of road will bring to each of us.

Climb upon the box-seat, gentlemen, if you will see what is to become of Anthony: so I am with you, you will not be sent packing.

Look how he is being borne unwitting over the Bridge of Care, into the Valley of Love, by Thicket Perilous, clean through the Waters of Anger to where the white road curls over that grey upland, and we can see it no more. As well for Anthony that he has not our knowledge. The next league or so will play the deuce with his emotions . . .

One last look, gentlemen. Can you see that cypress there, tall by the wayside, down in the Valley of Love? We will descend there, by your leave, for the driver will pull up his horses and the coach will stop. A dog has to be set down—a little dog, gentlemen, with rough hair and as soft brown eyes as ever you saw . . .

Anthony covered the distance between the station and the Dogs' Home at a good round pace. In fact, he was somewhat out of breath when a maid admitted him to the house and, leaving him in the hall, went in search of the superintendent.

As the fair-haired girl made her appearance, his heart began to beat furiously.

"How's my little dog?" he said jerkily.

The girl looked grave.

"I'm afraid he's pretty bad, Mr. Lyveden. He's naturally very strong, and we hope that'll pull him through. We ought to know one way or the other within twelve hours."

"I see," said Anthony dully. "When I didn't hear, I hoped——"

"Didn't you get my telephone message?"

Anthony shook his head.

"When did you ring up?"

"Yesterday. I spoke to somebody—a man, and asked him to tell you. I don't know who it was."

Anthony went very white.

"I fancy I do," he said grimly, and drew in a quick breath. "And now may I see my dog?"

The fair-haired girl led the way to the hospital.

The building, which stood by itself, was as fresh and cool as a dairy, and a faint clean smell of sanitary fluid rose from its tiled floor. In the hall were a table and a watchman's chair. Half a dozen rooms led out of the hall. The girl went straight to the door of one of these, turned the handle gently, and the next moment they were in the little chamber. This was full of light and air, for the French windows, which gave on to a broad verandah, were wide open. Upon the garden beyond the sun was shining gloriously.

By the side of the great square basket set in a corner Anthony fell on his knees.

"Why, Patch . . ."

The little scrap tried gamely to leap for his master, but his strength failed him, and he fell sideways on to the pine shavings. Lyveden gathered him gently into his arms and let him lick his face.

"Did you think I was never coming, Patch? Did you think I'd forgotten my little dog? My poor little fellow . . . my little boy . . ."

The laboured breathing slipped into a cough, and Lyveden laid the terrier back on the shavings. There he got to his feet and coughed desperately. The exertion seemed to exhaust him, for, when the fit was over, he lay down where he stood, keeping his eyes upon Anthony and now and again moving his little tail.

The fair-haired girl, who had gone, reappeared, followed by the grey-headed kennel-man bearing a deck-chair.

"I expect you'll like to stay with him for a bit," she said pleasantly.

Anthony thanked her, and she left him alone.

For Patch's sake, Anthony sat very still.

Considering that he had been afoot since half-past five, it is not surprising that after a little space he fell asleep.

Queer idiotic fancies bestrode his dreams: what was impossible came naturally to pass: earth became wonderland, and no one wondered. Patch and Miss French lay in sick beds upon respective mantelpieces: Lord Pomfret had come to mend the telephone, and his tool-bag was full of roses—the scent of them filled the room. Anthony himself was forging a two-pound note upon a page of Bradshaw, and was terribly afraid that it would not pass muster: something weighty depended on this, and all the time the scent of the roses was hindering his efforts: it came between him and the paper, so that he could not see: he brushed it away angrily, but it came back . . .

He awoke suddenly, for no reason.

Patch was lying very still, breathing more easily. His eye met Anthony's, and the tip of a red tongue came into view.

The faintest suggestion of perfume was in the air. This was so slight and fleeting that Anthony, after a little, charged it to his imagination and thought no more of it.

Presently he rose and, setting his hat on the chair, where Patch could see it and so expect his return, strolled out on to the verandah.

From the depths of an easy-chair Valerie French lifted her eyes from *The Times* and smiled very charmingly.

"I'm glad you've come out," she said. "I think it's a mistake to sit there too long at a time."

That Lyveden felt perfectly at ease with her, and neither started nor spoke constrainedly, is worthy of note. It is, in fact, the best possible evidence that his belief in their affinity was well founded.

"You're quite right," he said. "After all, the great thing is to be on the spot. I'm afraid this means that your dog is ill."

Valerie looked away.

"He's worse than Patch," she said slowly.

"I'm awfully sorry."

As he spoke, Anthony remembered how the dogs had met in the drive a week ago. That, then, was how Patch had come by the sickness. Her dog had infected him.

Valerie looked up suddenly.

"I'm afraid I was awfully rude at the inn that day," she said quietly. "It was rotten of me."

"No, it wasn't," said Lyveden quickly. "You were startled and upset and——"

"I've said all that to myself—several times. But it won't wash. It was just rotten, and I'm very sorry."

Had she been other than my lady, Anthony would have felt like a beggar whose feet a queen was washing. As it was, he felt like a king.

"I knew you never meant it," he said.

"Why?"

"Because it wasn't like you."

"How could you know that?" said Valerie.

"I don't know. I suppose I guessed. I suppose . . ." Anthony hesitated, and the colour came into his cheeks. "I think I knew you too well."

Valerie French nodded, as if she had received a reply which she knew to be correct.

"You're very fond of your dog," she said.

"He's all I've got."

"All? Haven't you a single friend?"

"Not one," said Anthony.

A little cough came to her vigilant ears, and Valerie rose to her feet. As she came to the window, she stopped and looked at Anthony with a quiet smile.

"I don't think you ought to say that," she said gently. "Not since you know me so well."

Long after she had passed in, Lyveden stood gazing at the threshold from which she had spoken . . .

The veterinary surgeon was with Patch.

After a tender examination, he rose to his feet, and Anthony introduced himself.

"He's a fine little dog," said the other. "And he makes a good patient, but I'm afraid he's in for a bad time." He turned to the kennel-man. "Have you warned Williams and Minter?"

"I have, sir."

"That's right. From now on he mustn't be left."

"Will he have some brandy, sir?"

"Not yet."

In answer to Anthony's questions, the surgeon spoke plainly.

"He's getting steadily worse. That will go on for anything from six to twelve hours. Then one of two things will become apparent—either that he will recover, or that he can't."

"What about my being with him?"

"If you like to be near, sir, yes. As to being in the room—he's a highly-strung little fellow, and in the circumstances I don't advise it. Of course, if there was any sudden change . . ."

"I'm in your hands," said Anthony. "I'll leave my hat here. Then he'll know that I'm at hand."

"You couldn't do better, sir."

The surgeon was patently glad of an owner who would do as he said.

Anthony stopped to touch the damp muzzle . . .

Then he stole gently away.

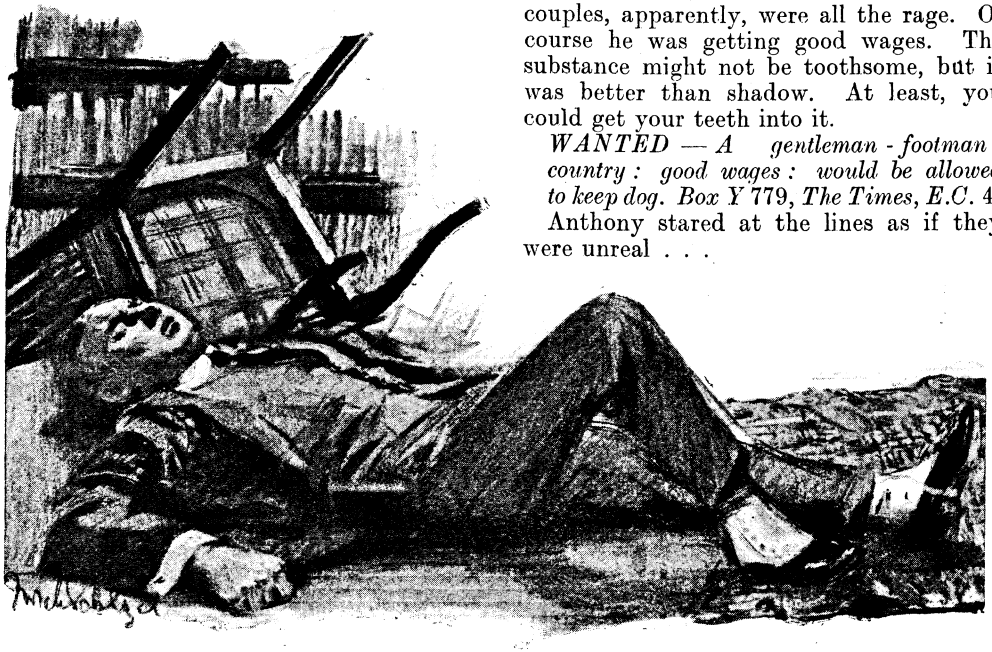
Out on the verandah he made his plans. Not for fifty Marquesses would he leave ere the change had come. He decided to telegraph to the butler. Perhaps they would understand. Any way, it could not be helped. If he were to be dismissed, he would try again. Only the fear of unemployment had kept him in Eaton Square. The very thought of Lord Pomfret made his blood boil. Perhaps, even if they said nothing, it would be better to leave.

He picked up my lady's *Times* . . .

The trouble was that the demand for men-servants seemed rather small. Married couples, apparently, were all the rage. Of course he was getting good wages. The substance might not be toothsome, but it was better than shadow. At least, you could get your teeth into it.

WANTED — A gentleman-footman: country: good wages: would be allowed to keep dog. Box Y 779, The Times, E.C. 4.

Anthony stared at the lines as if they were unreal . . .



"Anthony side-stepped and hit him under the jaw as hard as he could. Lord Pomfret fell flat on his back

Then came the flutter of a frock and herself stepped on to the verandah. Mechanically Anthony set down the paper as if it had been contagious.

Valerie did not speak of her terrier, nor did she ask after Patch. Instead—

"If we went up to the house," she said gravely, "I think they would give us some tea." Together they left the verandah and passed through the pleasant grounds. "I've got a room in the village," she added, "and I've sent for some things for the night. Will—will you have to go?"

"No. I shall stay. I can make shift." He smiled. "The Army's a good school."

"Do you wish you were back?" said Valerie.

"I don't think so. A school has its drawbacks. If I were back in the Army, I couldn't be staying to-night."

Without thinking: "You like to be your own master?" said the girl, and could have bitten her tongue in sunder.

Anthony winced. Then—

"Yes," he said slowly, "I do."

Valerie thought frantically. Then—

"That's the best of being a man," she said. "Take our two cases. You have your own establishment—at least, I suppose you have—your own chambers, your own servant. I live with an aunt. If I broke away and set up a separate *ménage*, I should be talked about. To be her own mistress and excite no remark, a girl must be in penury."

Anthony's heart seemed to have stopped beating. The murder was out. From my lady's words it was plain that she did not know his calling. She had not recognised him, then, that night with his livery on. Fool! He might have known that she would not—could not hobnob with a lackey.

Instead of



and lay perfectly still . . . The silence was broken by the sound of a dry laugh."

combating her statement, he made some knock-kneed reply . . .

For setting wheels within wheels, you cannot match Fortune. After all, she has made trochilicks her hobby through all the ages. Look at her handiwork here. Jill knows Jack for a flunkey and seeks to dissemble her knowledge, for fear of bruising his heart. As for Jack, when Jill stumbles upon his secret, he curses his luck: now that he believes it inviolate, he is in despair.

Tea was served to them in a quiet parlour. It being their first meal together, their friendship should have grown fat. Instead, it lost weight steadily. They were ill at ease—both of them. To make things worse, Anthony began to feel that he was an impostor.

He walked with her to the village and sent his telegram. Later they dined together. They dared not go far away, and the landlord of a neighbouring inn was persuaded to serve eggs and bacon. This he did with an ill grace, and, that there might be no mistake about his annoyance, charged for it in the bill. Anthony paid the amount as if it were nothing, and Valerie French writhed . . .

Afterwards they strolled in the garden and sat upon the verandah. The hours which should have been so wonderful went by lacklustre. Between the two a phantom barrier had been set up.

As ten o'clock was striking, Valerie was fetched.

When the summons came, they were in the garden, and she left Anthony without a word. Desperately sorry for her, miserably fearful for himself, he followed as far as the steps of the verandah . . .

Twenty-five minutes passed, perhaps half an hour. Then there was movement in the chamber. A door was opened. The lights, which had been low, were turned up.

A moment later Valerie appeared at the window, putting on her gloves.

As she came to the steps, Anthony rose out of the shadows.

"May I see you back to the village?" he said.

She just inclined her head.

They passed in silence out of the starlit garden on to a pale grey road. The hedgerows on either side loomed up out of the darkness, blacker than night. A lane led down to the village, leaving the road on the left. It was the shortest path. As Lyveden started to turn, Valerie laid a hand on his arm.

"Not that way," she said unsteadily. "It was our last walk together—Joe's and mine."

Then she burst into tears.

In a flash the barrier that had stood between them was done away.

Anthony put his arm about her instinctively. She caught at his shabby lapel and clung to it, sobbing piteously. They must have stood so for five minutes or more.

When she was better, they walked on slowly, Anthony talking as naturally as if she had been his sister. All his constraint was gone.

"Don't I know how you feel? Oh, my dear, I'm so grieved for you. I know, I know . . . Everything you do, every way you turn, calls up some piteous memory. But it'll pass, dear, very soon . . . Time's very merciful . . ."

They came to the sleeping village and the door of the house where she was to pass the night.

"Sleep well," said Anthony, and put her hand to his lips.

Valerie dared not speak. For a second she hesitated, inarticulate. Then she leaned over and set her cheek against his.

The next instant she was gone.

* * * * *

Patch turned the corner of danger just before cock-crow.

With his heart singing, Lyveden went for a walk. He chose the old way—the way he had trod so often with Patch by his side and Valerie in his heart. My lady had filled his cup. The knowledge that Patch would live had set it brimming. He saw the dawn up and felt jubilant. He found new beauties of Nature at every step. His sympathy with my lady was a thing detached. It could not cloud his happiness. Eaton Square was forgotten. There were only she and he and Patch in all the world . . .

He came to "The Leather Bottel," borrowed a razor of an old groom, and presently took a bath under a pump. Later he sat long over a joyous breakfast.

When he came back to the Home, there was Valerie. She just ran to meet him.

"I'm so glad, I'm so glad," she said. Then her lip quivered, and she turned away.

Anthony's heart smote him for his late selfishness. For as good cause to congratulate her, he would have given anything.

They went up to Town together by the same train.

The feverish haste with which she climbed into "a third" was almost comical.

Arrived at the terminus, Lyveden handed her out. Since it was Sunday morning, the station was quiet. Indeed, except for a crowd of " theatricals "——

Anthony remembered the roses which Lord Pomfret had told him to purchase with an unpleasant shock.

As if a switch had been turned, all the uncertainty of his future rose up in a cold black wave. The hopelessness of their friendship stood out brutally. The thought that he was an impostor came pelting back, to set his ears burning, and—the barrier that had stood between them crashed again into place.

Mechanically he saw her into a cab and told the driver to go to a house in Mayfair. Then he took off his hat.

" I hope," he said lamely, " I hope you'll get home all right."

Valerie looked at him curiously. Then she put out her hand.

" I shall never forget your kindness," she said gently.

* * * * *

When Anthony, some fifty minutes later, opened the front door to admit Lord Pomfret into his father's house, he saw that his hour was come.

For a moment the youth glared at him with the eyes of a snake. Then—

" Oh, you're back, are you ? " he snarled.

He entered the house, and Anthony closed the door.

" I'm very sorry, my lord, about the roses." He held out the two pound notes. "I entirely forgot them."

Lord Pomfret snatched the notes out of his hand.

Anthony turned to go.

" Here ! " Anthony stopped in his stride, hesitated, and then turned back. " What d'you mean, ' you forgot ' ? It's a lie. This is the second time you've let me down, you wash-out. And if you think——"

" My lord, I tell you——"

" Don't dare to answer me," raved the other. " I won't have it. I'll bet you're ready to pitch a hell of a tale, but it's no good. D'you hear, Lyveden ? It's no good. You see, I answered the telephone on Friday, when your lady-friend rang up about the dog . . . I know that dog, Lyveden. I've had one myself. And, what's more, I happened to be at Marylebone this morning . . . Yes. That was a bit of bad luck, wasn't it ? My roses can go to blazes, but the infernal scullery-maid you were dancing round——"

Anthony hit him full on the mouth.

The other reeled backward, tripped over a rug, and fell heavily. He was up in an instant, and came at Anthony, bellowing like a madman.

Anthony, who was now quite cool, hit him between the eyes.

For the second time Lord Pomfret went down.

Again he got up, to hurl himself at his assailant, mouthing obscenity.

Anthony side-stepped and hit him under the jaw as hard as he could.

Lord Pomfret fell flat on his back and lay perfectly still . . .

The silence was broken by the sound of a dry laugh.

Anthony swung on his heel, to see the Marquess of Banff in the library doorway.

" He's got a lot to learn yet," observed that nobleman, glancing at his recumbent offspring. " A deuce of a lot." He put up his eyeglasses and stared at Anthony. " If I'd known you could box, you should have given him an hour a day. Too late now. You'll have to go, of course. What are your wages ? "

" Six pounds a month, my lord," stammered Anthony.

The Marquess took out a note-case and extracted six notes.

" Does he owe you anything ? " he said, peering.

" No, my lord."

In silence the money passed.

" Better get out at once," said the Marquess shortly.

" I'm—I'm very sorry, my lord, that this should have happened."

" Tck ! I heard what he said. I don't blame you. If you want a reference, you can give my name. That'll do."

Anthony bowed and left him. The sprawling figure was showing signs of life. He passed through the hall quickly.

Half an hour later, his baggage in hand, he descended the kitchen stairs.

At the foot of these he encountered the second footman.

" 'Elp ! " said the latter. " Don' say you've got the bird, mate ? "

" Got it in one," said Anthony.

" But 'oo——"

" The Marquess."

The fellow exploded.

" It's a perishin' shame ! " he cried. " It's a——"

Anthony stopped him.

"No. He treated me handsomely. I—I bought it."

"You didn't never sauce 'im, mate?"—incredulously.

"Not exactly. You'll see." He put out his hand. "So long!"

The other stared at the fingers before accepting them. Then—

"So long, mate," he said dazedly.

Anthony let himself out.

The second footman's inability to comprehend the matter continued until a quarter past one. It was at that hour that he did as he had been told, and carried Lord Pomfret's luncheon up to his room . . .

The condition of his lordship's countenance was most illuminating.

The third story in this series will appear in the next number.

FEBRUARY.

FEBRUARY, February,
Why art thou chary
Of blossom and bloom?
Old Winter is ailing,
His vigour is failing;
Go, dig his tomb.

February, February,
Why be so wary?
Laugh, kiss, and sing!
Oh, many a lover
Has found love over
Before the Spring.

February, February,
Earth's lot will not vary,
The primrose will shine;
And though lovers may sever,
One friend is for ever,
And that friend is mine!

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



Photo by] [*F. J. Dickie.*

A TYPICAL LOAD OF FURS ARRIVING FROM A NORTHERN CANADIAN DEPÔT.

MY LADY'S FURS

FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT DEMAND FOR FURS, AND HOW IT IS MET

By HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE, F.R.G.S.

WHEN a fashionable woman of to-day purchases a fur coat, or her more humble sister invests in a fur wrap, they probably little dream that these dainty garments represent more adventure and strange happenings than any other article of personal or household adornment.

We owe Canada to the fur trade, at once the oldest and most romantic of industries. It was the existence there of the prized ermine and sable that led to the formation of the Hudson Bay Company. For a period of two hundred and forty years this unique trading concern held sway over a territory equal in area to the whole of Europe, and it was mainly its presence there that led to the passing of this land under the British flag.

While the industry can claim the distinction of being the oldest in the world, it is as versatile and as full of life and romance to-day as ever it was. Indeed, never in its history was the demand for all kinds of pelts, both in the raw state and made up, so great, and never in the history of the trade have prices ruled so high. Moreover, scores of animals whose pelts were regarded a few years ago as of little or no value commercially are to-day being ruthlessly hunted, and their skins sold at unheard-of prices. Even the humble rabbit has been pressed into service as a dress fur, and as much as five shillings per skin is readily paid for raw pelts of first-class quality.

Despite its high price, fur is being worn in every shape and form, and is even being placed on the tops of boots. Every woman, whatever her position or her rank, has a desire to possess furs, and it is because of this great demand that prices are high.

The world's annual output of fur, based on an estimate covering the four years 1910 to 1913 inclusive, was estimated at



Photo by] A TRAPPER'S CABIN. [*F. J. Dickie.*

£19,000,000. Of this, Asia contributed £5,200,000 worth of skins; North America, £4,800,000 worth; Europe, £4,800,000; and Australia, £1,200,000. Then came the War, and for some months the fur trade was paralysed. In the winter of 1915 prices dropped to the lowest in its history. Fur coats ordinarily fetching £25 to £30 apiece could be picked up for £5 to £10. The high wages paid to the munition workers and the immense war profits made by many people in this country, and more particularly in America, soon resulted in a big demand for furs—a demand that has been an ever-increasing one. Prices rapidly rose, and the value of the raw pelts alone has increased from 125 to 300 per cent. and more over those of 1913. Experts declare that the world's output of fur to-day must reach an annual value of not less than £50,000,000.

Right up to August, 1914, London was the acknowledged centre of the world's fur market. It was to London that the raw pelts came from all over the world to be dressed and graded and re-sold to the trade for distribution all over the globe. Hundreds of thousands of raw skins from America were treated here and then sent back in a dressed state. Unfortunately during the War we were unable to attend to this business, with the result that America decided to dress her own skins, since when she has continued to do so. As a consequence, there is to-day an interesting fight going on between the American cities—more particularly St. Louis—and London for the supremacy of this novel but valuable trade.

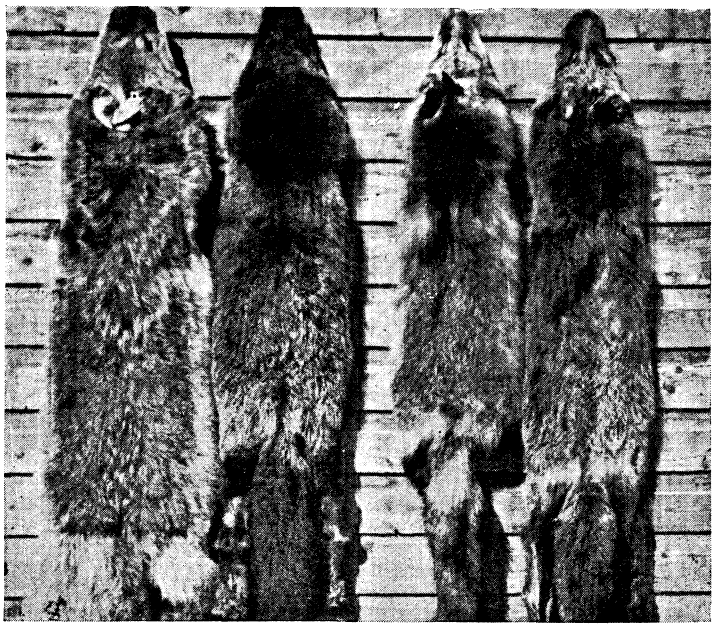
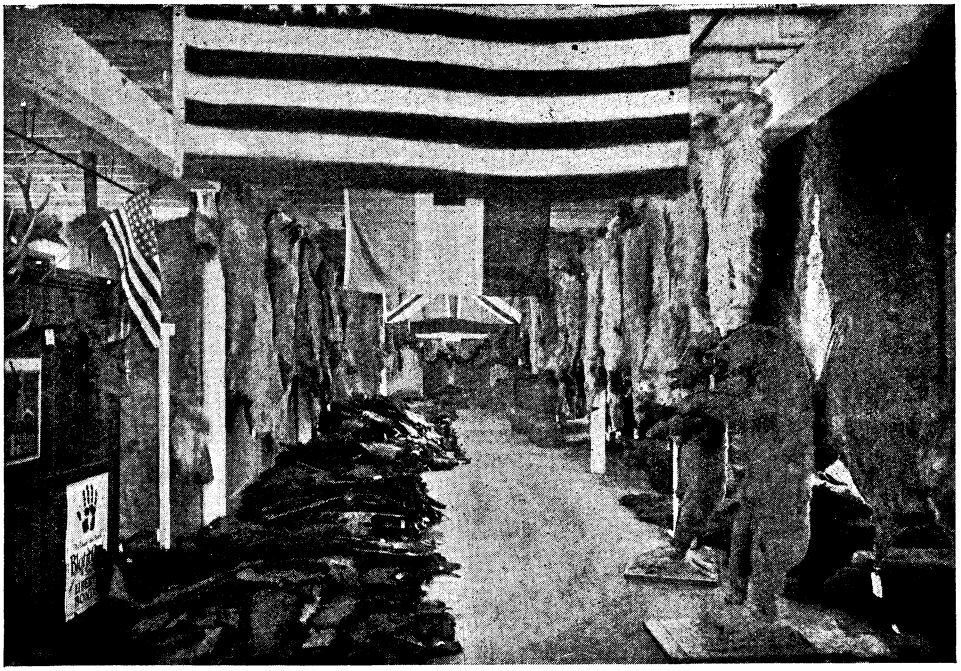


Photo by] [*F. J. Dickie.*

FOUR OF CANADA'S TYPICAL SKINS: (LEFT TO RIGHT) COYOTE, VALUED AT £4; SILVER FOX, WHICH RANGES FROM £40 TO £500; RED FOX, £20; CROSS-BREED, £10 TO £60.



OVER FOURTEEN HUNDRED POLAR BEAR AND OTHER BEAR SKINS BEING HANDLED AT RECENT AUCTIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL FUR EXCHANGE AT ST. LOUIS.



BUYERS INSPECTING FURS BEFORE A SALE AT THE INTERNATIONAL FUR EXCHANGE AT ST. LOUIS.

Two photographs supplied by Messrs. Funsten & Co.



AN EVENING WRAP OF SABLE.

America is out to capture the world's fur market, and it must be admitted that she has got a firm grip upon the industry. It was only four years ago that the International Fur Exchange was started in St. Louis, yet to-day it is the largest of all the dealers in this merchandise. At one of its recent sales it disposed of 5,585,510 pieces of fur and 6,160,000 rabbit skins, or 11,745,510 pieces in all, for which they received £3,042,200. The sale lasted ten days, and was attended by over five hundred buyers from all parts of the world.

The skins included 9,055 Alaska seal skins, 165,832 fox skins of various kinds, including the rarer silver and blue fox, 1,500,000 Russian squirrels, 65,000 flying squirrels, 19,000 martens, 189,000 ermines, 1,200 fisher, 21,500 lynx, 565,000 muskrats, 84,000 mink, 378,000 opossums from Australia, 22,000 wallaby, 75,000 raccoon, 5,000 otter, 275,000 skunk, 21,000 beaver, 7,000 Russian sables, 6,875 chinchilla, 4,800 leopard, 900 mountain lions or coyotes, and various others. With hardly an exception, the prices obtained were in excess of those achieved at any previous sale. The advance ranged from 25 per cent. to 125 per cent. and more. The rabbit skins were in their glory.



AN ERMINE CLOAK WITH SABLE COLLAR.

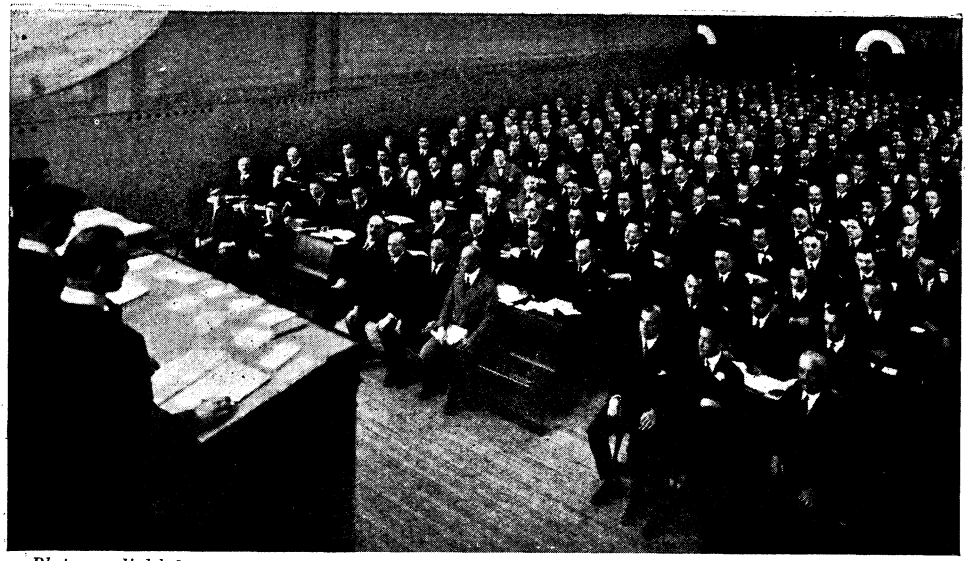


Photo supplied by] [*Funsten & Co.*

BIDDING FOR FURS AT AN AUCTION SALE IN ST. LOUIS AT WHICH OVER THIRTEEN AND A HALF MILLION FURS WERE OFFERED, THIS BEING THE LARGEST SALE EVER HELD IN THE HISTORY OF THE TRADE.

Choice collections of Australian rabbits for the furrier's trade sold for as much as £1 per pound, showing an increase of 25 per cent. over the prices previously paid. The pelts sold at this single sale were received in 1,400 different shipments, and came from all parts of the world. They were divided into 10,700 lots, the highest price paid for a single lot being £2,500 for a choice collection of musk-rats. This was by no means a record sale, thirteen and a half million pieces of fur being offered and sold three months later.

The London furriers are fully alive to the competition they are receiving from the States, and do not mean to let this valuable trade pass from their hands without a fight. They have formed an institution, known as the London Fur Trade Association, whose business it is to watch their interests and advise how best the trade can be kept in



Photo by] [*F. J. Dickie.*

PACKING FURS AT EDMONTON, NORTHERN ALBERTA, CANADA, FOR SHIPMENT TO LONDON: £50,000 WORTH OF CHOICE FOX AND OTHER SKINS BEING HERE SHOWN, AS PART OF THE CURRENT SEASON'S CATCH.

this country. Whatever happens, it may be accepted that London will always remain an important centre for the distribution of the world's fur. Indeed, London is now to be inexhaustible. Australia, too, has come to the front in recent years as a fur-producing country. It was in Canada, too, that the idea of breeding the rarer and more



A MINK COAT. A NATURAL BEAVER COAT.

getting virtually as many skins as it can conveniently handle.

Here, again, we must remember that the finest furs are those obtained from the British Empire. The best skins still come from Canada, and the supply would appear prized animals for their pelts, such as the silver fox, had its birth, and to-day all kinds of animals—foxes of many species, skunks, martens, minks, raccoons, and other creatures—are being reared like pedigree stock solely for their pelts.



A MUSQUASH COAT AND COLLAR.

The greater majority of the skins, however, are still obtained from the wilds by the lonely trapper, who every winter faces extreme cold, terrible snowstorms, and innumerable dangers in his quest for the more prized fur. The hunter must carry his traps and supplies into the remotest regions, where even lumbermen are unknown

He builds a low wide sledge capable of carrying three hundred pounds in weight, and loads this up with pork, flour, underclothing, and steel traps. And when streams and lakes will bear his weight, he starts into the wilderness, there to lead a hermit's life for seven months. Arriving at a point hundreds of miles, perhaps, from civilisation, the trapper looks for two parallel streams. Here he pitches his " home " camp, setting traps along both rivers. This enables him to visit traps for twenty miles down one of the frozen streams, camping in a brush shack at night, and returning down-stream next day. An able man will attend to a hundred traps, taking chiefly fisher, mink, skunk, and otter. But no animal is despised, for to-day all are valuable, which was far from the case a few years ago. Whereas the trapper was then content with 5*s*. or 10*s*. a skin, he now gets 20*s*. to 40*s*. apiece. Should he catch a silver fox—a by no means unlikely feat—it may net him anything from £80 to £100. Marten or sable readily fetches him £4 and more a skin. The pelt of the hitherto despised coyote, or prairie wolf, now nets a trapper £2.

But the life is exacting, and the frightful loneliness has driven some men insane. Otter traps are baited with fresh pickerel, and those for mink with musk-rat flesh or



A MINK CAPE TRIMMED WITH A NUMBER OF TAILS.

hare meat. The fisher animals, which include nearly all those of the weasel family, are particularly cautious and timid. A whole day is occupied, once or twice a week, in cooking food and stretching skins. These are scraped and stretched over wide thin slips of cedar wood whittled into shape with a pocket-knife.

The work is varied by catching fish, snaring rabbits, and taking musk-rat for bait and larder. Now and then the hunter may kill a wandering bear, an event which may lead him to a big store of wild honey in a hollow tree. Now and then he will shoot a deer or even a moose for the sake of the raw hide, meat, and fat, of which the last-named keeps his traps from rusting. A file serves him instead of a grindstone to keep axes and knives keen, and he washes his own clothes through a hole in the ice, drying them by an open fire.

In this utter solitude the fur trapper



A MOLE COAT WITH COLLAR AND CUFFS OF OPOSSUM.



A SKUNK WRAP.

lives, not knowing the day of the week or the month of the year. The dazzling glare of February often brings snow blindness, but the violent snowstorms are his worst enemy. On no account must he be caught in one, for it may mean death. Many a hunter has lost his life through being overtaken by a storm while making a round of his traps. So blinding is the fall that it is impossible to see a foot ahead. All landmarks are obliterated, and, getting lost, the hunter wanders about for hours and even days, to fall at last exhausted. There he lies, his limbs quickly become numbed, and, being now unable to move, he waits—for death. These storms will confine a man to his shelter for days at a time, and when they are over he has to dig himself out.

When the trapper finds that the fur upon the animals he is taking shows signs of thinning and is of an inferior quality, he realises it is time to break camp and return to civilisation. If animals have been fairly



A MOLE COAT.

plentiful, and he decides to come again next season, he secretes his traps in hollow logs or buries them in the earth. Placing his pelts on the sledge, he trudges off through the forest on a journey of several weeks. On arriving at a town or, perhaps, a depôt of a fur company, he disposes of his skins, generally after much haggling, for the trapper is a wily individual, and knows what furs are fetching, and is not behindhand in demanding his rightful share. To the right man trapping is profitable, and if the stories told by the traders are correct, many a man who was content a few



A SQUIRREL WRAP.

seasons ago with £150 to £200 for his catches, now looks for five, six, or even ten times that amount, and gets it.

When one remembers that this form of trapping has been going on in Canada for some centuries, one would imagine that the prey must be getting worked out. But such is far from the case. All over the Dominion there are vast stretches of swamp lands where dwell innumerable furred animals, and, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands are taken yearly, the supply seems endless.

Should one particular species become at all scarce, the trade adjusts the matter by booming some more plentiful variety, which becomes the craze for the moment, and so gives the depleted species a chance to recover. Moreover, the art of dressing and dyeing has reached such a scientific pitch that it is possible to take the pelts of the commoner animals and turn them into beautiful imitations of the more highly prized furs.

The modern furrier can take the better class hare and rabbit pelts and convert them into a really beautiful imitation of the seal, ermine, fox, or lynx. When rabbit skins first appeared upon the market, it was thought that they would remain as the poor man's fur; but the imitation is now so excellent that it has become the fur of the well-to-do. For the past three seasons rabbit and hare pelts have simply swamped all other skins. They are being used to-day by the furriers of Europe and America in huge quantities. Last season this country alone took over 82,000,000 hare and rabbit skins, chiefly imported from Australia, and converted them into all kinds of fur garments, while America used up nearly a hundred million.

After passing through the dye works they come out, not as rabbit skins, but as coney seal or some other fanciful name. Not one woman in a hundred purchasing a garment made of these skins believes she is buying what were originally rabbit skins. It requires an expert almost to detect the difference. Rabbit should have a deep fur; but that means nothing, for the dresser's evening machine can cut it to a stub. The dye can be told, as a rule, from the colour of the underskin, and the true nature of the fur is indicated by the "catty lick" of the sheen. Although rabbit skins so dyed and treated possess fair wearing qualities, their lustre does not last. Nevertheless, the rabbit skin as a dress fur has come to stay. In fact, the trade would be at a loss without it.



A CHINCHILLA WRAP WITH THE SKINS WORKED IN SHELL PATTERN, VALUED AT £6,000.

One of the most costly furs to-day is that of the chinchilla, which is a kind of South American mouse that burrows in the ground. It has short, squirrel-like front legs and long hind legs that give it an absurd miniature kangaroo look. It runs from eight to fifteen inches in length, with a long tail, and feeds on its hind legs, like a squirrel. A few seasons ago pelts of this creature sold as low as 10*s.* apiece. Recently they have been sold under the hammer for as high as £20 and more apiece. Naturally quite a number of pelts are needed to make a respectably-sized garment, and many scores were requisitioned to make the chinchilla wrap shown in the photograph above. This, however,

is regarded as quite a rare garment, being declared by the trade as the finest fur coat to be placed upon the market in recent years. It is, in fact, a really lovely wrap, with a single fastening, the skins being worked in shell pattern. It is valued at £6,000.

Allied to the chinchilla in the fur world is the mole, of which more than four million a year are used among the European furriers alone; but as each mole has eight to ten wives and an enormous progeny, even that demand has not exhausted the supply. The mole's fur has been compared to plush, but it is far more velvety than any plush ever worn, and, provided the skin is properly treated, is more durable. Mole wraps and coats have become very popular garments.

A fur that has come somewhat to the front this season, in the form of artistic wraps, is the squirrel, the London trade alone having requisitioned over seven hundred thousand squirrel skins, paying from eight shillings to as high as £3 per skin for them, according to the rarity of the species. Although durable, the squirrel has always been classed among the fragile furs. It is the grey squirrel, the rarest of the squirrel tribe, that is principally used for whole-piece garments such as wraps and coats. This skin is known in the trade as natural fur, because, like fisher, it defies dyeing. The skins of the light striped yellow and brown species are employed as linings, both dyed and undyed, and the dark brown and black skins for cuffs and collars. The large dark-furred squirrels have come in the past from Austrian and German sources. It was in the dyeing of these skins that Germany excelled. The squirrel has a very wide range, and there are many different species, as is obvious when we find the fur trade handling 249 specimens and grades.



A MOLE SET.

Another of the so-called fragile furs is ermine. Some 200,000 skins were used by the trade this season, the price paid for them ranging from as low as 5*s*. to as high as 15*s*. per skin. When ermine was dotted with black spots, it was known as the miniver of Royalty; but with the doffing of many of the trappings of Royalty in modern life—except for coronation purposes—ermine

does not command the prices of a century ago.

The old way to distinguish ermine from white baby rabbit was the shading of sulphur yellow to his black tail tip; but this has been imitated to defy detection, and I should say the best way to detect imitation ermine to-day is that while rabbit is soft and silky, ermine is a crisp, thick fur, stubby in its thickness and incapable of being stroked the wrong way. You can stroke rabbit and cat flat in almost any direction. Ermine, though soft as swan's down in the young, has a grain and lies in the same direction.

One of the most popular furs to-day is the skunk. It may truthfully be classified both as a common and a rare fur. It is one of the most durable of furs, and capable of standing much hard wear. A skunk coat, in fact, will last a lifetime. For years the public would not buy skunk, as skunk. It had to be given such fake names as black sable to get it across to the trade. That day is past. The beauty of a perfect black skunk, combined with the durability of the fur, has increased it in public favour and sent prices up. The skunk is really a species of weasel, very prolific, seeing that a single family will rear twenty young ones in a season. And closely allied to the same family are the mink, musk-rat, and sable, all very popular furs, as soft a'most as down and very durable.



Photo supplied by] [*Funsten & Co.*

A COLD STORAGE ROOM AT THE INTERNATIONAL FUR EXCHANGE AT ST. LOUIS.

The higher-class furs are kept in cold storage until the sales take place, as much as £1,000,000 worth of furs being stored here at a time.

THE COMING OF SANDI

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "The People of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

A LONG broad-beamed boat was pushing her way through the black waters which swirled and eddied against her bow. She was painted a dazzling white, and her two high smoke-stacks were placed one behind the other, giving her an appearance of stolidity which was very satisfactory to the young man who had constituted himself her chief officer. The open lower deck was a few feet over the water-line, and seemed at a distance to be decorated with bright scarlet poppies. Near at hand these resolved themselves into the new red tarbooshes of the native soldiers who crowded the iron deck. Above was another deck, from which opened the doors and latticed windows of a dozen cabins. Two or three deep-seated wicker chairs and a light table were disposed on the clear space under the big awning aft, but this space reserved for the hours of leisure was deserted. Three men in white duck trousers and coatless stood on the little navigating bridge where the shining brass telegraphs stood, and behind them, raised on a grated dais, a native, bare to the waist, held a polished wheel.

The ship was named *Zaire II.*, and the big searchlight on the bridge, the quick-firing guns which were swung out over each side, the tiny ensign which fluttered at her one mast, all these things stood for the expectation of war.

The ship was running between sheer rock walls, and the passage was growing narrower. Already the water at the *Zaire's* bow was piled up to the height of three feet above the level of the river, and the hull shivered and strained at every thud of the engine.

"We're only making five knots," said the troubled Sanders, "and we're nowhere near the worst part of the rapids."

He pointed ahead to where the flanking walls of the cañon rose to a greater height.

"Hell Gate properly begins at that bend," he said. "They've a full head of steam below, Bones?"

Bones was mopping his steaming face with a handkerchief coloured violently.

"A swollen head of steam, dear old Excellency," he said solemnly, and added unnecessarily: "Trust old Bones."

Behind the steersman was the broad open door of a cabin. It was plain but pleasantly furnished but for the bizarre Thing which stood by the side of the white-covered bed.

Hamilton, major of Houssas, lolling with his back to the rail, caught a glimpse of this gaudy ornament and smiled, though he was in no smiling humour, for the country had brought afresh to him all the dreams he had dreamt in olden times, and, since those dreams and memories revolved about a capricious girl who had found her happiness in material things, they brought him little comfort.

"At least Guy Fawkes is enjoying the trip, sir," he said.

"Guy Fawkes?" Sanders was startled from his own thoughts. "Oh, you mean my *bête?*"

With a glance at the river ahead, he walked to the door of his cabin, Hamilton at his elbow, and looked in.

Held by two iron brackets in the wall was the most uncouth idol that Hamilton had ever seen. Its head, carved in wood, was painted green, save for its scarlet lips,

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and from the sides of its head spouted a pair of ears which might be—and were, in fact—used as handles to lift the monstrosity. The body, painted fantastically, was pear-shaped, and the three squat vermilion legs on which it was supported added to its grotesqueness.

"Guy Fawkes ought to create a sensation in the Old King's country, if we——" He stopped.

"If we get there," finished Sanders quietly. "Well, the next few hours will decide that. Yes, he's rather beautiful, isn't he?"

"I don't quite understand, sir," said Hamilton. "It isn't like you to—er——"

"'Descend' is the word you want," smiled Sanders of the River.

"Well, yes. I've never known you to attempt the placation of a chief by mumbo-jumbery. That sort of thing is usually done in story-books; it isn't done on the river."

"We're going to a new country and a new people," said Sanders, "and that is my excuse. And Guy Fawkes will not burn," he added meaningly.

"Not—— Oh, I see! You mean the Old King is burning his gifts. . . . Guy Fawkes is made of iron, and will not burn. And you think that if it doesn't burn he'll be impressed?"

"They have never had a steel *bête* in this country before," said Sanders, and turned back to the bridge.

"Bones, come here." Hamilton beckoned him. "What do you think of Guy?"

Bones shook his head.

"He's a pretty old dear," he said, "but I wish I'd had the painting of him. Have you ever thought, dear old major and comrade, what I could have made of him with a few jolly old art shades?"

"Sanders thinks that when the Old King discovers that he won't burn——"

Hamilton was on the point of unburdening himself of his troubles, but changed his mind, and at that moment Sanders beckoned him.

"We're near to the crux of our situation," he said grimly. "Set twenty of your men at each side of the ship, and give them the poles I took aboard at the Isisi city. The current will probably drive us against one or the other wall of this ravine. Your men are to pole off the ship from the side."

Hamilton disappeared down the iron ladder which led to the lower deck.

The precaution was taken only in time. Ten minutes later the *Zaire* pounded slowly round the bend of the "gate," and the fierce current caught her. Slowly but surely she drifted over until the crest of the high cliff hung above her mast.

Nearer and nearer to the wall she drifted, her stern swinging the quicker. Then, when it seemed certain that she would smash against the smooth yellow rock, a dozen poles were thrust against the wall, a dozen sweating men grunted and strained, and the stern came out again.

The pressure of the river was now beyond anything Sanders had seen. The bows of the *Zaire* gathered water as a broom gathers snow. It sloped down almost from the rail above the bow like a big fluid hillside.

"More steam," said Sanders laconically, for the *Zaire* was practically at a standstill.

The smoke-stacks flamed, bellowing huge clouds of sparks, and slowly the boat moved forward. They pushed into what was by comparison slack water, and gathered their strength for the next bend. Here, so powerful was the force of the current, the river literally canted to one side, being, as Sanders judged, fully three feet higher on one "bank" than the other. "Bank" was a courtesy term, for the cliffs fell sheer, and where the river ran to the left, the waters had scooped out a huge hollow, so that in places the river's edge disappeared from view. Though the sun was still high in the western sky, the cañon was in semi-darkness, so high were its walls.

"We'll run the searchlight off the storage batteries," said Sanders. "Be economical, Bones. I can't afford an ounce of steam for the dynamo, and as likely as not we'll be in this infernal hole till nightfall."

He was worried, yet felt the thrill and exhilaration of the fight. No boat had ever passed upstream through Hell Gate, though many had come down with the current. He remembered with a wince the half-mad wife of the dead missionary Ferguson, who had fled through this cañon in a crazy little launch. Just then he did not want to think of missionaries—or their golden-haired daughters.

"The next bend is the worst," he said to Hamilton. "If we get through, we shall be at Rimi-Rimi to-night. I have an idea that the river is not watched as is the mountain road, and we ought to fetch up at the king's city without his being any the wiser."

The safety-valves of the *Zaire's* engines were hissing ominously as he put the nose of the boat to the last bend.

Then came Bones from below, Bones in soiled duck and with patches of black grease on his face.

"Cylinder leakin', sir," he said lugubriously, and Sanders could have wept.

* * * * *

On the great hog-back crests of the Ghost Mountains at certain seasons of the year the spirits of chiefs come to eat salt with the most powerful ju-jus. Here comes M'shimba-M'shamba, who munches great swathes of forests and swallows whole villages for his satisfaction, and M'giba-M'gibi, who transforms himself into any manner of thing his fancy dictates. He is the one who walks behind you on dark nights, and though you turn ever so quickly, he vanishes. His is the face you remember and then do not remember. So that when you meet a man on the highway and stop suddenly, half raising your hand in salutation, and as suddenly you discover that his is the face of a stranger, spit once to the left and once to the right, for this is M'giba-M'gibi, "He Who Is Not."

Men travel many miles to watch the cold salt spread upon the ranges. It comes in a night, a thin powder through which the black and brown of rock show in piebald patches, and some there are who have seen the Ugly Ones gather in the dawn hour, and some, a daring few, have climbed to the peaks to steal ghost salt, only to find that, by the magic of the ju-ju, the salt has turned in their hands to water of terrifying coldness.

Through these mountains runs one road which winds upwards to the saddle of the highest ridge. Here in the right season the salt of the spirits drifts thigh-deep, and for just so long as the season lasts—never more than a month—no man ventures to cross the great barrier. Yet in such a time came a tall man who feared neither devils nor snows, for there was a greater fear in his heart which urged him onward, and bare-legged, bare-breasted, naked but for the kilt of monkey-tails about his middle, and having no other protection from the chill winds but his oval wicker shield, he trudged through the drifts.

He carried three short fighting-spears, and hanging from his belt was a broad-bladed sword fitting into a scabbard made from an elephant's ear. He crossed the mountains, setting his face to the Great King's country, and the spies of the Great King saw him and beat out the news upon their signal drums.

None molested him, for the Great King's drum had rattled incessantly all one night with this instruction, and he who disobeyed the Old One did not wait for death, neither he nor his family.

He reached the first village on the wrong side of the mountain—for him—as the first flush of dawn lay pinkly on the snows. The village was awake and assembled, every man and woman and even the young children.

"I see you!" he boomed before the little chief. "I am a tired and a hungry man. Let me sleep and eat."

The chief said nothing. He gave the stranger the flesh of a young goat and a mess of mealies and fish, and then took him to a hut.

The stranger slept like a log for five hours, then walked to a little river and swam for a while. The sun dried him, and the chief again fed him. But none spoke to him, for all the village knew that he was the king's meat.

The guest asked for no information and gave none. He waved his farewell, and the chief nodded silently and watched him disappear round a bend of the narrow path into the forest. Then he called a palaver of all his people.

"Who saw a stranger?" he intoned.

"None saw him," the whole village chanted.

"Did he come?"

"He did not come."

"Did he go?"

"He did not come; he did not go; none saw him."

So passed the stranger—a nothing.

Up in Rimi-Rimi, the city of the Great King, the evening came down redly, and the seven hills of the city crawled and swarmed with life, for in the shallow about which the squat hills rise the big fire of the king was burning, and his carved stool stood before the hut of his chief wife. Here in the shadow of his palace the Old One had delivered justice for innumerable years. He was older than memory, and some said that he had begun with the world. Yet it was agreed that he was not so old as the Devil Woman of Limbi, who was immortal.

As the sun's edge tipped the mountain, his war-drums volleyed their summons, and K'salugu M'popo, the king, showed his gums. Thus he smiled always when the drums rumbled, for was not the skin of one the skin of Oofoobili, his brother who

had risen the Territories in rebellion against him, and was not the other the skin of M'guru, the Akasava chief who had carried off the king's daughter?

The crazy grass huts that covered six of the hills—the seventh was bare and sacred to the processes of the king's justice—gave forth their members to the number of fifty thousand, the aged and the young and those who were dying, these latter being carried on litters, for when the Old King's fire burnt and his war-drums rumbled, the searchers of the king's guard slew all that was living within the huts.

They sat in a great half-moon of faces, divided straightly by five paths that radiated from the king's chair like the spokes of a wheel, so that his ministers and servants might have free access to evil-doers, and witnesses a clear way to the throne, and they sat in a solemn unbroken silence.

An hour, two hours, he kept them waiting, and then, without warning, the drums ceased, and sixty thousand hands were raised in salute, even the hands of those in the litters on the fringe of the great assembly being held up by their friends and relatives. The Old Man came from his white hut and walked slowly to his chair. There was a grizzle of grey at his chin, and the faintest powder of white on his bony head. About his shrunken form was wrapped a cloak of native silk of a certain colour.

Helpers threw great logs of gumwood on the fire, and it blazed up with a roar.

"Let my wives be numbered," said the Old Man with a cracked voice, and his minister, Lubolama, Chief of the Fongini, *seni-seni*, and commander-in-chief of his armies, walked behind the king's chair and counted the king's wives, for they were not exempt.

"Lord, all your women are here."

The Old King nodded. He sat with his foot on a stool, his elbow on his knee, and his chin resting on the palm of his hand, looking at the fire moodily, and thus he sat for a long time, and none dare break the silence.

"Let her come," he said at last, and Lubolama made a signal.

Through the last of the lanes came four of the king's guard, and in the midst of them a prisoner. Presently she knelt before the king's majesty, a slip of a woman, obviously a foreigner, for her nose was straight, and her lips were thin, and her skin of a light chestnut colour.

The king stared down at her through the slits of his eyes. "O woman," he said, with the halting deliberation of an old man, "this night you die."

"Lord, I do not deserve death, for I have done no harm to your people," said the girl. "Also I am not of your race."

The king chuckled and half turned in his chair. "He was not of my race, and yet he died." And she lifted her eyes and saw by the king's hut a straight pole where something hung—something that was dried and shrunken by the month's sun, something to which thin rags still hung. She shivered and cast down her eyes.

"He was not of my people, yet he came. By the road over the mountains he came, a little chief showing him the way."

He stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"Now, it is not good that I, the Great King, shall be betrayed by little foreign chiefs who show the white man secret paths to my country, and I have waited very long, woman, before I sent my young men into your land to take you and bring you to me. And they waited long also, for they are young and cunning, and presently, when your little chief had gone to the forest, hunting, they came upon you at night and brought you from the land."

The girl licked her dry lips and said nothing, for her abduction was ancient history to her.

"Therefore I set these two great sticks that you and your man might follow together the way the white lord went."

Again she raised her eyes and saw for the first time in the gloom two great poles which flanked the pitiable Something which once had been a loving, laughing, thinking man. She drew a long breath.

"My lord, you have not got him," she said with spirit, "for he is too great for you and too cunning. Your young men would not cross the mountains and meet his army on the plain-by-the-forest."

The Old King chuckled again and waved his hand. "He comes!" he said. "He comes!"

The girl twisted her head and stared. Down one of the lanes a tall man was striding toward her unattended, his wicker shield on his arm, the steel tips of his fighting-spears glittering in the light of the fire.

"Lord!" she wailed, and ran to meet him as he reached the clear space before the king, falling at his feet and clasping his knees.



"The king did not move. He dropped his eyes only to the level of the black pistol in Sanders's hand."

Instantly four giant guards were about him, but, tall as they were, he topped them by inches. He made no resistance, but offered his shield and his spears. Unarmed he came before the king's face, holding the girl by the hand.

"Lord," he said boldly, "what shame is this you put upon me and my master? For behind me are the spears of a million men and guns that say 'ha ha,' and men drop dead."

The king's eyes were hardly visible now, so tight were his lids held together. He screwed his neck to look up at the big man's face.

"There is no king in this land but K'salugu M'popo," he said. "Where is M'siti?" he asked, and the guards and ministers who stood about him chanted:

"His hut is broken."

"Where is Goobini, the mighty one?"

"His hut is broken."

"Where is B'lili and all his forest of spears?"

"His hut is broken."

He was wide-eyed now, and there glared within their depths a cold fire.

"This night, little chief, you die," he said, "for you sent a white spy into my land that you might poison me and my people. And, because of you, Sandi is come to the land with his soldiers. And, chief, you shall not see him or tell of the white man Tomini. Therefore by my great cleverness have I brought you here, where Sandi cannot come because of the swift waters. O cunning one, where is your cunning now, for did not I lead you here without a spear behind you when I took your woman?"

The big man nodded his head.

"Lord, that is true," he said simply. "This woman is life to me, and I would rather die at her side this night than live with my people. This also Sandi will know, for I left him a book saying I was gone into your country. But, lord, because I come in peace and love I brought you these."

He took from his waistband a heavy bag, and, kneeling down, spilt the contents at the king's feet. They were coins of gold and silver, and they made a little heap.

The king looked at the presents with avaricious eyes, for he knew that these strange round pieces brought many desirable things from an outside world, and that from the Portugisi he could buy square bottles full of hot delight. Only for an instant did he waver, then he made a gesture, and Lubolama, stooping, scooped up the coins and, walking to the edge of the fire, threw them in, and the big man stiffened. The king had burnt his gifts before his eyes, and that meant death.

He turned to the woman at his side and caught her up in his arms, speaking to her in a language which the king did not understand. Then almost instantly they were torn apart and thrown to the ground. The big man made no resistance. The gangways now were blocked by armed men, and behind the king's hut the circle was completed by rank after rank of guards.

Those whose office it was to sacrifice bound wrist and ankle, and, lifting them up, laid them with their feet at the king's feet. Above them stood the sunburnt naked figure of the executioner, his broad knife in his hand.

"Speak well of me to the spirits, to the ghosts, and to the great ones of the mountains," the king repeated the formula monotonously, "also to M'shimba-M'shamba, and speak kindly of me to all ju-jus—strike!"

The executioner measured, touched the throat of the big man tentatively with his knife, as a golfer all but touches the ball he is about to strike, and then raised the keen blade about his head.

And there it remained, for a soul-piercing shriek, a terrible sound which ended in a howl, momentarily paralysed all within its hearing. The king half started from his carved stool, his mouth agape, and, regardless of the doom which awaits all who take their eyes from the king's face, fifty thousand heads turned in the direction of the sound.

"O Lubolama, what sound was that?" asked the king in a high voice.

"Lord, I do not know," said the trembling man.

It was the captive on the ground, his eyes blazing, who might have supplied the solution, but an interruption came from another quarter.

Clear in the light of the fire a group of men were walking down one of the lanes toward the king's chair, and the armed guard melted out of their way. Two were native soldiers, carrying something which they deposited within a few paces of the dumbfounded king's feet, the other two were indubitably white men, and it was the smaller who spoke.

"O king," he said, "know me."

"Who are you, white man?" The king found his voice with difficulty, for he knew.

"I am he they call Sandi of the River, and I have been sent by my King to be the overlord of these lands, and I have brought you a rich gift which will bring happiness to you, and shall protect me from evil."

The king's eyes strayed slowly from Sanders's lean face to the thing at his feet. It was a hideous figure straddled on three scarlet legs, and surmounted by a head of peculiar hideousness. The pear-shaped body was painted with flaming designs, and the big wooden head bore the tribe marks of the Tofolaka people, and had ears which the Houssas had used for handles as they straightened the monstrous, pot-bellied thing under the king's gaze. Nor was this all the decoration, for stuck in the hideous wooden head were four small flags which were unfamiliar to the king.

"O Sandi," he said—he was still shaking as much from the effect of the *Zaire's* syren as from this tremendous visitation—"I——"

Again that shrill shriek arose, sobbing and wailing and echoing against the high bluffs of the plateau on which Rimi-Rimi was situated, and the king shrank back in his stool.

"I hope to Heaven Bones isn't overdoing it," said Hamilton in Sanders's ear, and Sanders shook his head slightly.

"What was that?" whispered K'salugu M'popo, the Old One.

"That was my spirit, king," said Sanders. "Now I have come to talk to you as king to king, and I have brought you a wonderful present, and there are many things I would say to you."

He had seen the captives as he came in, but had not looked down at them.

"First, O great one," he said, "there shall be no sacrifices in this land." And he stooped down swiftly and with his knife cut the grass ropes which bound the two captives.

He did this so quickly and so skilfully that the old man was startled to silence.

"Lord!" whispered the big captive, and Sanders nearly dropped his knife.

"Bosambo, by Heavens!" he gasped. "Go quickly, Bosambo," he whispered; "there is death in this city."

By now the king had recovered himself. "Sandi," he said harshly, "you have come to my city, but who knows when you shall go?"

"I alone know, king," said Sanders softly, "for I go now, and, if you move, my little gun which says 'ha ha' shall spit at your stomach, and you will have many days of agony, and none shall give you ease until you die."

The king did not move. He dropped his eyes only to the level of the black pistol in Sanders's hand. Had the white man whose dried skin now rattled against the crucifix come so into the king's presence, he might have lived—for a while—but they had pulled him down at the entrance to the city.

"O Sandi," said the king mildly, "I will do you no harm, and you shall have a hut in my city, for I see you are a great one and very cunning. Who but a man of magic could walk through the swift waters? As to this man and woman——"

"They come with me," said Sanders equably.

The king hesitated. "Let it be," he said.

Sanders gave an order and started to back away, and Bosambo, gathering up his wicker shield and spears, which lay where they had been thrown, covered the rear.

"O king," said Sanders in his deep Bomongo tongue, "see I walk like a crab, and all the time my little gun is looking into your heart, and if you move or speak you will die."

The king said nothing, and the little party moved backwards through the clear alleyway, and nobody stopped them. They had reached the lines of litters before Sanders turned.

"There is no possible chance of getting to the boat," he said. "The old man will remain friendly so long as he's covered by my gun. As soon as he gets into the hut, we shall have the whole guard after us."

"Can't we make the landing and the boat?"

Sanders shook his head. "That would be impossible now," he said. "Look!"

A line of figures was leaping into the bush. He saw them dimly by the flickering light of the king's fire.

"They are going to head us off. It is the hill of execution, as I expected," he said. "We can hold that for an hour."

"And after?" asked Hamilton drily.

"All things are with God," said Sanders piously, as he raced through one of the flimsy suburbs to the bare hill where no house stood and where only the bones of innumerable martyrs lay.

"They'll hardly come to the hill to-night," he said breathlessly, as they gained

the top; "there are too many ghosts about even for the king's guard."

From where they stood they looked down into the basin, and could see the commotion their escape had produced. Through his night-glasses Sanders saw the old man still sitting in his chair of state, and chuckled.

"I'm afraid Guy Fawkes isn't going to do us much good," said Hamilton. "But the old man seems to be examining our god with three legs."

"Wait," said Sanders.

"Suppose the Old King isn't impressed by the unburnable Guy?" asked Hamilton.

Sanders did not reply. From the basin below rose a hubbub of sound. The people were scattering, and long orderly lines of soldiers were filing before the king.

"I thought it was worth trying," he said, "and it struck me at the time as rather amusing." And he chuckled.

"What is it supposed to be, sir?"

"The ju-ju of the League of Nations," said Sanders, without a smile.

The Old King had risen. They saw that from the hill.

"O people," he was saying, and the sound of his voice came faintly and unintelligibly, "O soldiers, you have seen this night a shame upon my house. Now you shall go and seek out these devils, and to-morrow we will have a great palaver."

He pointed to the three-legged idol, and two of his men lifted it and threw it upon the fire.

Bosambo needed no night-glasses. He stood at Sanders's elbow.

"Lord," he said in a whisper, "they have burnt your present, and that is death."

"So I think," said Sanders, and as he spoke there leapt from the fire a white tongue of blinding light, and there came to their ears a roar louder than any that man had heard, and a shock that almost threw them from their feet.

"Good Heavens!" gasped Hamilton. "What was that?"

"That was the body of Guy Fawkes—an aeroplane bomb!" said Sanders softly. "Somehow I didn't think it would burn very well."

He stood looking down at the havoc and the fury of flame which sent thousands wailing to the edge of the river.

"Do you know, Hamilton"—he turned to the other with great seriousness, for the niceties of official matters worried Sanders—"I'm rather troubled about those flags I stuck on Guy Fawkes's head. *Is* America in the League of Nations?"

The third story in this series will appear in the next number.

THE WANDERER.

YOU came like a star from the misty darkness
Out of the night to me,
Sending hope from the chill and starkness,
Lighting the way that I might see.

And I? I closed my eyes to your coming,
Ignorant in my pain;
And you were gone, like a wild bird homing
Back through the windy skies again.

LEOPOLD SPERO.

THE NEW MASTER

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY G. D. ARMOUR

JOHN WICK'S outfit, on the first occasion that he attended a meet of the Duke of Harlow's hounds, represented a cash value of some ten thousand pounds. This sum might be surmised after a casual glance at his motor-car, his fur coat, and his wife's pearl necklace.

In spite of this, he attracted very little attention. A few people, who recognised the great tea merchant, looked at him with curiosity, for it was known that he had just bought Little Elm, one of the "show" places of the neighbourhood. However, in that part of England hunted by the Duke of Harlow the purchase of a country seat was no passport to county society. It was a conservative region, the preserve of a select number of old families, who entertained lavishly between themselves, but had a cold eye for strangers.

It was noticed that the Duke acknowledged Mr. John Wick's greeting with reserve, and that his daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, looked the other way. After this, any of the county who had been uncertain of their attitude had no further doubt. Such people as the Wicks could not be received.

John Wick lit a cigar and examined his new neighbours. He was a man used to having his own way; he had no intention of being treated as a pariah in any society. He observed the marks of respect paid by everyone to the Duke as he sat on his big chestnut surrounded by his hounds.

"A stuck-up lot, these hunting people," said Mrs. Wicks, as the field jogged by to the first draw. Hardly one of the pink-coated men had looked in her direction.

John Wicks rolled his cigar into the corner of his mouth. He was incensed at the cold, disinterested glances cast at his three-thousand-guinea car.

"I reckon I'd best buy them dogs," he said.

"What—the '*ounds?*" said Mrs. Wicks, dropping an "h" for the first time for two years.

"Yes, the hounds," said her husband. "Whoever has got them seems to be the big noise down in these parts."

"But, John, you can't hunt," said Mrs. Wicks.

"No, but Peter can; they learned him riding at Cambridge. He'll be home in March."

"The Duke would never sell his hounds," said Mrs. Wicks. "Why, they've been here hundreds of years!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Wicks profoundly, and from his manner of speaking his wife surmised that he knew something.

* * * * *

On a March evening, three months later, the Duke and his daughter sat at dinner. Three men-servants in knee-breeches, buff waistcoats, and plum-coloured coats waited upon them, moving noiselessly in their buckled shoes across the carpet. The table was lit by candles, as were certain of the more notable pictures round the walls. At the Duke's right hand was placed his customary bottle of claret. Every night of his life, winter and summer, he drank a bottle of claret at dinner. The Duke was a man of fixed habits, which was the reason why, though he and his daughter were alone in their home, they dined as usual in the big dining-room, attended by their men-servants. Even on the rare occasions when his daughter was away the Duke still sat in state in the great dining-room, with his men-servants and claret. The waging of wars, the passing of governments, the coming of Bolshevism, these things left him unmoved. Satisfied in his own mind that he was a just landlord and employer, it would not have occurred to him that those under him could be of different opinion. Therefore the Duke had lived serenely through a period when landlords and capitalists were fearing for their existence.

He had lived all his life at Merle, rarely going to London, except for coronations, royal funerals, or the performance of certain hereditary duties about the Court. Despite

his age, his eyesight was keen, his hearing good, and his intelligence as alert as it had been forty years ago, when he succeeded his father as master of hounds. For two hundred years hounds had been kept at Merle by the reigning Duke of Harlow.

The Lady Elizabeth resembled her mother, who had died five years ago. She was like a Dresden china figure, gracefully built, delicately coloured. In her tastes she took after her father. She cared little for balls and parties; only once had she with difficulty been persuaded to spend a month of the summer in London. She loved horses, hounds, and life in the open air. Her rose-flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes were evidence of this. The Duke was proud of her, the more so since he had no son. Most evenings father and daughter sat opposite to each other in the great dining-room, talking over the day's doings, while the Duke drank his claret.

During the past month Elizabeth had noticed that her father had seemed pre-occupied. When he spoke of his horses and hounds, he had been as eagerly absorbed in the subject as ever, but he had spoken less of late, and Elizabeth, watching him during his silences, believed she saw shadows of sadness flit across his face. On non-hunting days her father was always closeted with Mr. Budd, the agent. Elizabeth knew that difficulties about money had arisen. It was a long while now since anyone had been asked to stay at Merle. Once, all through the season, the house had been filled with guests.

On this particular evening her father's silence filled Elizabeth with foreboding. She knew instinctively that something was amiss.

The Duke over personal matters was a man of few words. He ate his dinner and drank his claret with his customary composure, talking to his daughter of the mystery of scent on a windy day, and the evil of hunting vixens late in the season. Elizabeth listened closely to what her father had to say. She had acquired all her knowledge from his lips.

At the end of dinner the Duke broke the news succinctly.

"Budd says I shall have to give up keeping hounds," he remarked, replenishing his glass.

Elizabeth laughed. "Budd has been saying that for the last five years; he's a pessimist."

The Duke drank a mouthful of wine. "I'm afraid he's right this time. I went into things with him this afternoon."

"Dad," she said in horror, suddenly realising her father was not joking, "you couldn't let the hounds leave Merle."

"You can't keep hounds if you've got no porridge, or horses if you've got no oats," said the Duke shortly.

A look of acute anxiety had come over Elizabeth's face. "But there's no one in the county would take the hounds, if you gave them up."

"Budd says that fellow Wick has offered to take 'em," said her father.

"What—the tea merchant?"

The Duke nodded as he pushed back his chair. "The fellow who bought Little Elm at the beginning of the year. Tea merchant, is he?" He walked towards the door which led to his private sitting-room, to which he always retired to smoke a cigar after dinner. Elizabeth watched the tall, erect figure of her father disappear. She made no remark. Unspeakably shocked as she had been by the news, all her thoughts were with her father; she felt that his heart would be well-nigh broken. His hounds had been his whole life. Since a child she had been used to hearing them from her bedroom when she first woke. On Sundays, when the bells rang in the little church, built over the vaults where each Duke of Harlow was laid in his turn, the hounds always set up a peculiar "music" in sympathy with the bells, that was never forgotten by anyone who had heard it. And now stables and kennels were to stand empty.

When her father had gone, Elizabeth slipped on a coat and ran down the garden to the agent's house. She felt she must hear the true story. One glance at Mr. Budd, sitting at his paper-strewn desk with misery stamped upon his face, confirmed her worst fears. She hardly needed to hear the story that he told her—of how things had been getting worse for some time, how the Duke would not listen to any warning, and how the crash had come suddenly with the failure of certain securities.

"It amounts to this," said Mr. Budd, "his Grace must either sell his hounds or go bankrupt, in which case he'd have to sell, anyway."

"But not to that dreadful Mr. Wick," Elizabeth protested.

Mr. Budd appeared thoughtful. "Costs a lot of money to keep hounds," he said. "There is no one else in the county could afford to take them over. Wick has offered

to on terms, I may say, which are very advantageous to his Grace."

Elizabeth frowned.

"No one speaks to the man; he—he is simply a tradesman."

"They will have to be civil to him now, if they are going to hunt with his hounds. That is his idea, I fancy."

"His hounds?" echoed Elizabeth indignantly. "Why, he hardly knows a hound from a fox!"

"He is taking over all the hunt servants, and I believe he has got a son who is in the Army," said Budd.

"Oh, I hate him!" said Elizabeth. "It is too awful!"

* * * * *

The news that the Duke was to resign the mastership of the hounds at the end of the season, and that they were to pass into the possession of Mr. John Wick, spread quickly through the county. At first the intelligence could hardly be believed, so inseparably had tradition associated the ownership of Merle with the mastership of the hounds. Once the fact had been established beyond further argument, comment knew no bounds. The general sentiment expressed was a mixture of fury and resignation—fury that a retired tea merchant, who didn't know a horse's head from his tail, should become a master of foxhounds, and resignation because there was no one else in the county who could afford to step into the Duke's shoes.

"Can't see what the fellow wants the hounds for; he knows nothing about hunting. Never sees more of it than he can by following along the road in his car," grumbled the hunt secretary to the doctor.

"I hear that it is for his son really that the old man is doing it. The son was expected back last week, but couldn't get leave," said the doctor, who was well informed about most people's doings.

Though the approaching change was freely discussed among the rest of the hunt, no one dared talk of the matter to the Duke of Harlow. The Duke himself made no reference to it. It was observed that he was more cordial in his manner to Mr John Wick, and from time to time would point out a particular hound to the future master, or give him some information about one of the coverts.

Elizabeth, for her part, became more aloof than ever. Out hunting she appeared to be absorbed in the work in hand, and it was remarked that, though a fearless rider all her life, she seemed latterly to have thrown prudence to the winds. She was seen to set her horse at impossible places, and several falls were the result. When her friends remonstrated with her, she said shortly that it was the last season's hunting she was likely to have, and she meant to make the most of it. She confided to an intimate girl friend, who duly spread the story far and wide, that "neither Dad nor I could ever go out with the hounds, once they belonged to that dreadful Mr. Wick."

"I'm told the son is an awful young bounder," said the girl friend, who in reality had heard nothing about him.

"What else could he be?" Elizabeth shrugged her shoulders.

This conversation took place on the way to the meet at Barn End, on the last Saturday before the end of the season. Elizabeth, as she had often done lately, avoided the crowd at the cross-roads, and made her way quietly along a lane leading to the first draw. Since the disposal of the hounds she had avoided facing people as much as possible.

She was riding a favourite grey mare that day, a first-rate performer, who had carried her well through the season. The lane was narrow, muddy, and overgrown. Rounding a bend, she came face to face with a young man on a chestnut horse. The young man appeared to be in a hurry.

"Is this the way to the meet, please?" he asked.

"Yes, about half a mile down. Hounds are coming this way to draw; they are going to Spilts." She pointed to a wood on the left.

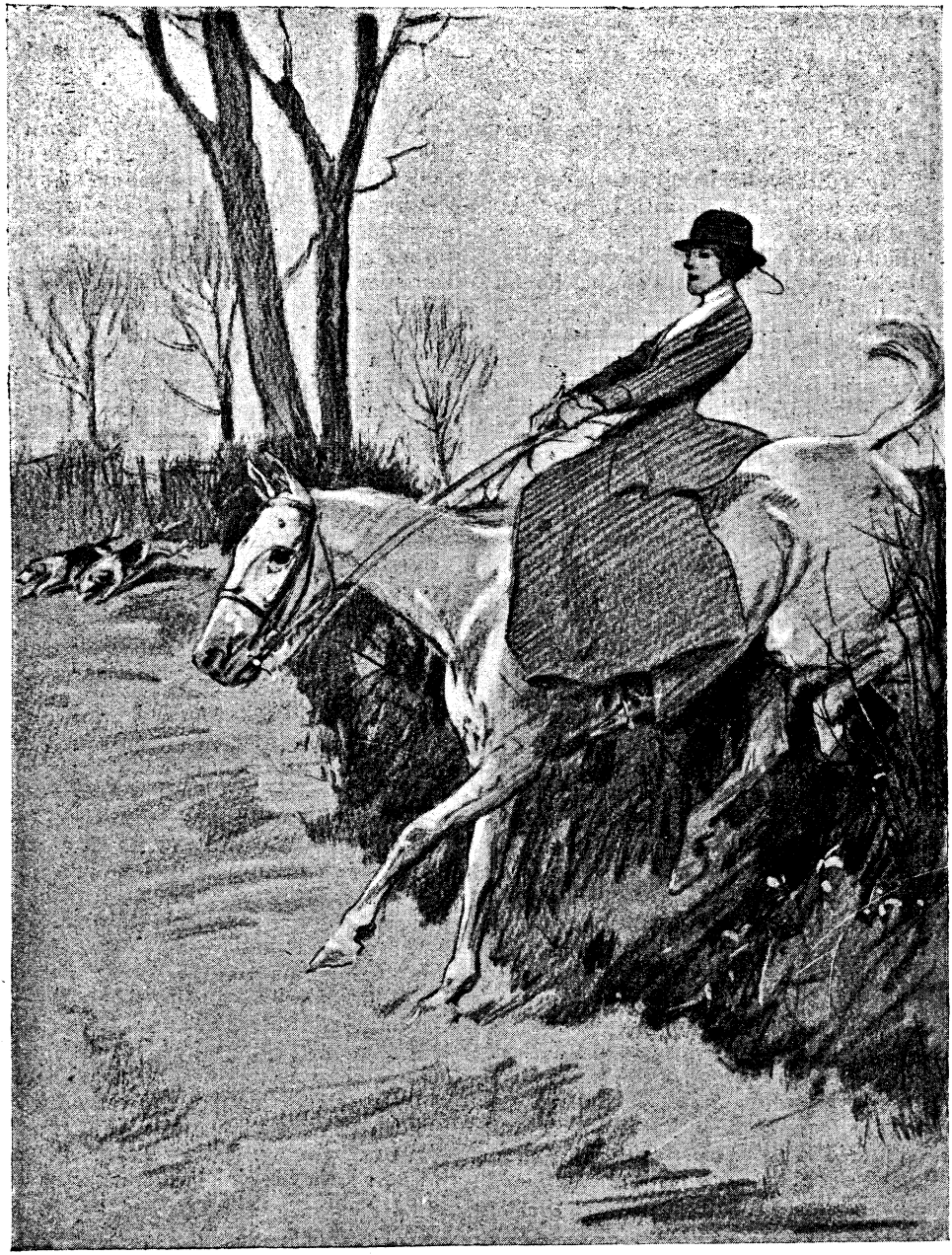
"Thanks." He raised his hat again. "First time I've had a hunt with these hounds; don't know my way about."

Elizabeth ran an eye over him and found him to her liking. His boots and breeches were well cut, his pink coat was surmounted by the black velvet collar of an old-established hunt club, he sat his horse well, and had a pleasant face. "A cavalry subaltern on leave," she surmised.

"The best place is to go through this gate; hounds will come across there." She pointed to a grass field on the left of the lane.

The stranger opened the gate, and they entered the field. The chestnut marked his appreciation of finding himself on grass by throwing a couple of bucks.

The stranger laughed and patted his horse's neck. "Feel rather that way myself,"



"Elizabeth and the stranger had the best of it over the rest of the field. For the next twenty minutes, except

he said. "First time I've seen hounds this season."

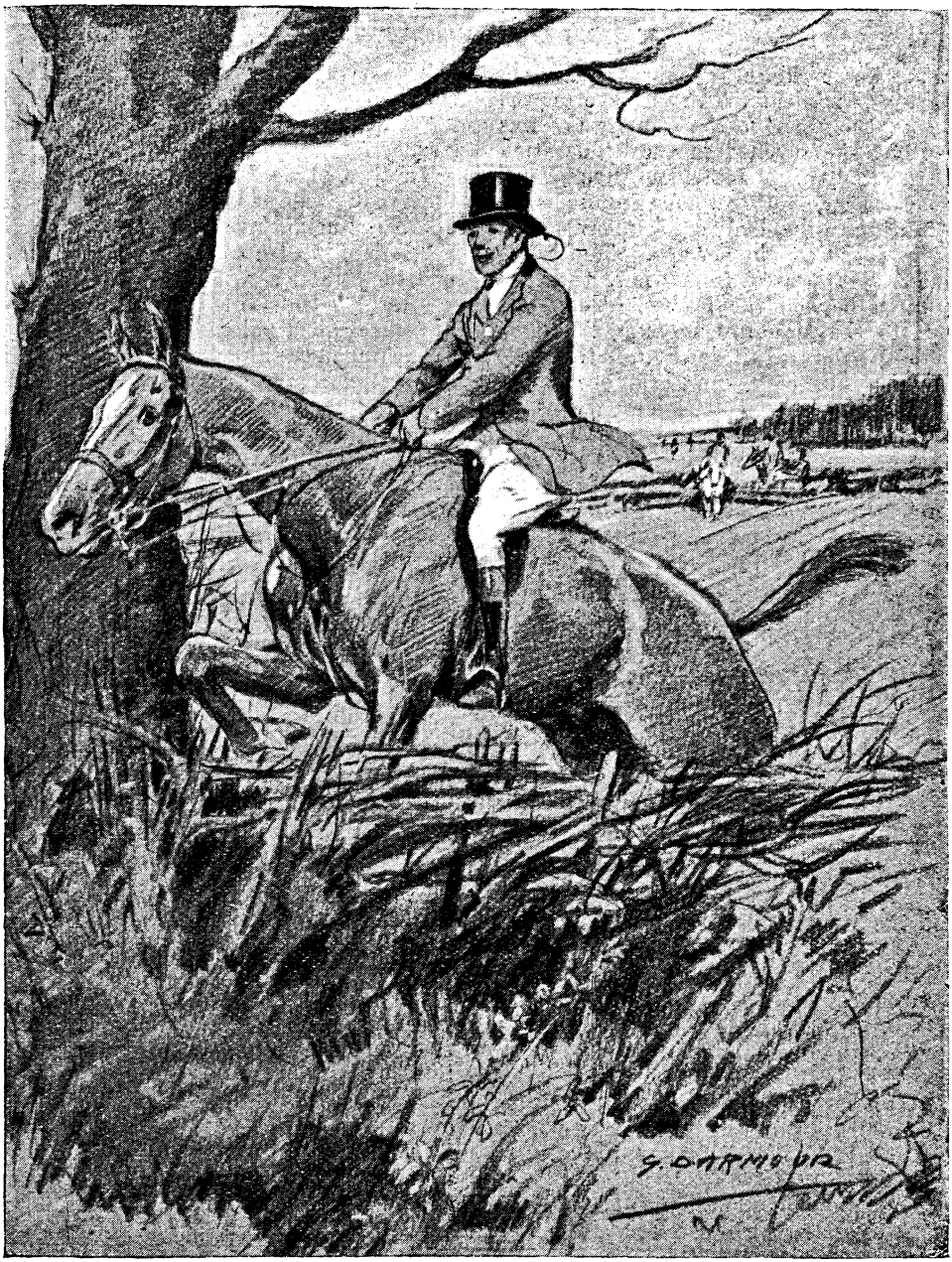
Elizabeth had been brought up on the old-fashioned maxim that it is vulgar to be curious, so she did not ask this smart-looking young man, whose whole bearing announced a long acquaintance with horses, why he had had no hunting that year.

A moment later both had their thoughts fully occupied. It was he who gave the alarm first. He reined in his horse and cocked his hand to his ear. A musical sound floated gently down wind.

"Sounds as though they are running," he said.

Elizabeth listened. The sound had grown louder now; there was no mistaking it.

"They *are*," she said. "Must have got on to an outlier on the way to covert. They are coming this way."



for the occasional gleam of a pink coat on her right or left, Elizabeth was unconscious of anyone's presence."

The excitement had communicated itself to the horses. The chestnut's ears were pricked, he was bearing on his bit.

Elizabeth listened intently, trying to divine the direction the hounds were taking. Suddenly she wheeled her horse and went back through the gate into the lane.

"This way," she said.

The stranger followed her. They jumped out of the lane on to some stubble, took a stake and bound abreast, and found themselves in the same field with hounds. Hounds were running very fast. Thanks to their lucky cut in, Elizabeth and the stranger had the best of it over the rest of the field. For the next twenty minutes, except for the occasional gleam of a pink coat on her right or left, Elizabeth was unconscious of anyone's presence. She was, as usual, riding at the top of the hunt; no other

woman was within a field of her, and only half a dozen men. With one eye on the hounds, the other on the country she was covering, she revelled in the exhilaration of the gallop. Watching houndwork fascinated her, as other women are fascinated by a hat shop. Suddenly a line of low willow bushes ahead caught her eye. The leading hounds disappeared from view, then reappeared beyond the bushes. They had come to the Moubray Brook. Now, the Moubray Brook, as all who hunt in the Duke of Harlow's country know, is an obstacle of no mean dimensions. It is deep, the banks are steep, the fording places few, its average width is a foot more than the water jump at Aintree. Elizabeth collected her horse and sent her at it, throwing her heart over first. She felt the mare stretch beneath her. They just cleared the bank. There was a thud on the earth as a man landed beside her. Looking up, she saw the stranger she had met in the lane.

"You've got some nice little jumps down in these parts," he said. "Hullo! The huntsman is down! Hold my horse, will you? I'll give him a hand."

The huntsman, covered with mud, was standing on the bank, endeavouring to pull his horse out of the brook. A little further down the first whip was in the same plight. The rest of the field, seeing what had happened, were galloping hard parallel with the brook, looking for an easier place to cross.

"Here, take my horse!" called the stranger to the huntsman.

"No, sir, I'll have this one out in a minute; the others will help me. You go on."

"We'd best do as he says," said Elizabeth. "I doubt anyone else trying to get over just here, and it's a mile to the nearest crossing."

They galloped on alone with the hounds. From the stranger's manner, Elizabeth quickly realised that it was not his first experience of hunting hounds himself. He held them to their line, and cast quickly and accurately when they checked on some plough. After the plough, hounds ran to a burning scent, and it was all Elizabeth and her companion could do to live with them. Galloping as hard as they could, and keeping straight on the line hounds were running, they lost a field in the next half-mile.

Again hounds suddenly disappeared from view.

"They've gone down to the railway cutting," said Elizabeth.

"The deuce they have!" said the stranger.

Another three hundred yards brought them to the edge of the cutting. They pulled up. Not a hound was to be seen.

"Where the blazes have they got to?" said the stranger.

Elizabeth pointed silently with her crop. Her cheeks had paled.

Looking in the direction she was pointing, the stranger gave a low whistle. Slightly to her right yawned the black mouth of a tunnel.

"We must get them out of that quick," he said, jumping off his horse. "Don't you come."

But Elizabeth was already on her feet, scrambling down the bank of the cutting.

"I say," said the stranger, overtaking her, "don't you come into this place; it will be dangerous if a train comes along."

"All the more reason to get the hounds out," answered Elizabeth. "There is no train signalled yet, anyway." She pointed to a signal outside the tunnel.

As they stood by the mouth of the tunnel, they could hear the whimper of a hound half-way up the dark interior.

"They are pretty far in," said the stranger. He put his hand to his mouth. "*Eu-back! Eu—eu—eu, boy!* We'll never get them out by hollering. Look here, you stand here and call 'em, and I'll go in and whip 'em to you."

There was a ring of authority in his voice, which made Elizabeth instinctively refrain from further argument. At a moment like this she showed up in true colours as her father's child. In the unwritten religion of the Harlows there was a special prayer for hounds, and Elizabeth had been brought up to think of a hound as an almost sacred animal, for whose welfare the interests of most of the other beasts of creation, including man, should be sacrificed. As the stranger disappeared into the darkness, her heart was beating wildly. How awful it would be if a train came along *with the hounds still in the tunnel!* She heard his footsteps echoing away in the darkness.

"*Eu-back! Eu—eu—eu, boy!*" she called. She heard the cracking of a whip and an echo to her call in the blackness. Then another sound fell upon her ear—the ping of a wire and a click. She turned sharp round. *The white arm of the signal had fallen!* It was an up-line signal, indicating

a train approaching from the far side of the tunnel.

Without another thought, Elizabeth dashed into the tunnel. As many hounds as possible must be saved; two could do more good than one. She ran two hundred yards, though it seemed to her half a mile before she overtook the stranger. He was walking very fast from sleeper to sleeper.

"Hullo!" he said. "You heard 'em out there, too. Unless I'm a Dutchman, hounds have pulled the fox down a couple of hundred yards along here. Hark to 'em!"

Unmistakable growls and yelps could be heard further along. Hounds were evidently indulging in the joyous task of breaking up their fox.

"The signal has dropped," she said. "There's a train coming."

"My hat! Which line—up or down?"

"Up." She pointed to the left of the tunnel.

Both now were running hard. A minute later they made out a heaving mass of white bodies sprawling across all four rails. Elizabeth was among them first, laying about freely with her crop. Bending down, she got hold of the mangled remains of the fox. The stranger lent a hand, and between them they got the carcase away. From the far end of the tunnel they heard a shrill whistle and the roar of an approaching train.

"Oh—the hounds!" said Elizabeth.

"Quick, give it me!" said the stranger, snatching the carcase from her and laying about him with his crop. Holding the carcase high above his head, he leapt over to the far side of the tunnel.

"Put them over to me!" he called. "We must keep 'em against the far wall as much as possible."

Elizabeth hesitated for a moment. She knew the danger of letting a stranger take a fox away from hounds and then putting them on to him. In their excitement and in the darkness of the tunnel they might tear him to bits; but, on the other hand, it was a certain way of getting hounds off the dangerous line. The train was now close; two yellow lights and a flaming funnel were bearing down upon them. Elizabeth yelled to the hounds—

"*Leu—leu—ou—worry, worry! Bite him and tear him!*"

Her voice could only just be heard above the roar of the wheels. The stranger stood with his back to the wall, the carcase of the fox held high above his head. Egged on by Elizabeth, the hounds rushed at the stranger, leaping in the air in their efforts to reach the fox.

"Mind yourself!" called the stranger. "You are too far out in the centre."

Elizabeth stepped nearer to the wall. As the train passed by with a deafening crash, she was bending forward, trying to count the hounds.

"Let's get out of this quickly," she said, when the danger was over. "Get away, there!" She swung her lash at two hounds which were still savagely trying to reach the fox. "Hullo! Have you hurt yourself?" she asked, noticing that the man was limping.

"No, it's nothing; they nipped me a bit," said the stranger.

The little party made their way slowly out of the tunnel. In the light of day Elizabeth saw that the stranger's clothes were torn in ribbons and one leg was bleeding freely; she also saw that all the hounds were safe.

"I don't know how to thank you enough," she said. "It was awfully plucky of you to stand there and let me put the hounds over to you; it was the only thing that could have saved them."

"It was jolly plucky of you to come into the tunnel and tell me about the train." The stranger looked admiringly at her flushed cheeks and bright eyes.

"I had to," she answered simply. "I couldn't leave the hounds in there with the train coming."

"*The hounds, eh?*" The stranger laughed. "By Jove, you are a girl after my own heart!"

Elizabeth held out her hand. "And you are a man after mine!" Then, realising the intimate nature of the remark, she flushed deep red. A moment later she had recovered herself.

"Will you tell me your name?" she said. "My father will want to thank you. He is master, you know." There was a touch of the *noblesse oblige* of a great lady in her voice.

The stranger looked at her curiously.

"Is your father the Duke of Harlow?" he asked.

Elizabeth nodded.

"By Jove, that's funny! I'm Peter Wick. My dad is taking over the hounds next season, and I'm going to hunt 'em. I say, wha—what's the matter?"

Elizabeth's eyes had filled with tears.

It took the county some time to get over the announcement of the engagement of the only daughter of the Duke of Harlow to the son of John Wick, tea merchant. Older folks shook their heads, and doubted if it was wise to mix blood thus freely, but a certain wise man in the land had no qualms. "They may be bred a bit differently," he said, "but that don't matter as long as they've interests in common."

Time proved the truth of this. Never did a master take unto himself a wife more whole-heartedly devoted to his hounds. Moreover, to the satisfaction of everybody, the kennels remained at Merle.



THE FALLING STAR.

THE last sweet time I took my way
Across the little darkening hill,
I journeyed at the end of day.
The evening airs were sweet and chill,
The sheep and lambs were safely folded,
One bird was singing still.

Having reached the gate of Heaven, I turned
(God gave me such an hour to die!)
Below my feet the sunset burned,
And over all the miles of sky
The stars were one by one unfolding,
Little and sweet and shy.

My hand was on the latch of Heaven,
My feet with starry dust were bright,
I heard the songs of souls forgiven,
I looked adown the star-grown height;
I picked a star for you, beloved,
And flung it down the night.

MARGERY RUTH BETTS.

THE PUPPY

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "Minnows and Tritons," "Both Sides of the Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES PEARS

BECAUSE of the moustache, they called Percy Grover a conceited puppy. A conceited young seal would have been apter, or walrus, except that we always think of walruses as middle-aged, and seals are self-satisfied rather than vain. It was a wonderful moustache, trim without spikiness, silky without effeminacy—a moustache that would have been equally in place in art studios or leading a charge of heavy cavalry. To it Percy owed everything—his position as floor-walker at the Emporium, his conquests, and the flattering jealousy of every male colleague. Colleague, mark you! Benjamin Snell, the proprietor, could not afford favouritism or spite. With him it was strict business from the word "Go!" and you heard the word "Go!" the day it appeared that your place could be better filled. But the possibility of filling it equally well at a lower wage was never considered. Benjamin Snell was selfishness incarnate, but he was not cheap. He could spend money grandiosely—with an object—and no more grudged a high salary to conspicuous ability than expenditure on structural improvements. But directly efficiency dropped, the assistant, highly paid or lowly, faced the open door. Everything gave way to business—the business of putting the last sixpence into the trousers pockets of Benjamin Snell. He was more consistently self-seeking than worse men, who are often delayed on the path of advancement by the wish to retard others. But while he planned nothing for others, he could rejoice when his schemes of self-aggrandisement benefited them. Seeking ever his own exaltation, he wished none to be abased, least of all his own juniors, for he hadn't a trace of the resentment that maturity so often harbours towards adolescence. The sight of an apprentice in new clothes, bursting with conceit and the joy of life, evoked always his bright greeting.

"Ah, John, you are beginning to feel at home with us, I see. You seem to have made a capital start in your department. Keep it up, John; don't weaken. There are wonderful chances to-day for you young men."

Ben knew, of course, that he got more out of the boys by this friendliness; but it was congenial to him, which I think entitles him to a good mark. His watchwords were "display"—"sunshine." He built his success on the resourceful cooperation of happy self-respecting men and women; he had no use for automatons or slaves.

Mr. Snell was more than tolerant of his debonair shop-walker; he admired him, not for his intellect, of which, so far, there had been little evidence, nor even for his looks, which the older man could not admit without reservations. It was only the women who were clear about Percy's good looks.

"He is only a moustache, Sarah," Snell said to his wife one evening, between the courses of their high tea. "He hasn't even a profile"—the speaker stroked his own nose indulgently—"and yet, next to myself, he is the most valuable worker in the shop."

"Surely not, Ben, at twenty-five!"

"My dear, Percy Grover on the floor is worth hundreds a year to the Emporium—hundreds. Watch him cajole an old dragon of the carriage brigade. In a minute he has her laughing like a girl, and he is even more valuable with our own women. We never had such service from them. They will do anything to please him."

"Certainly he is remarkably handsome."

"Handsome, my dear! Not a bit of it. Shorn of his moustache, he would be nothing."

"And if you shaved his eyebrows, bent his legs, and put a hump between his shoulders, he would be repulsive," said Eva, their only child. "How jealous men are! All the same, he isn't a scratch on

your other shop-walker, Mr. Sands. The best young men in West Lawton accept Mr. Sands as an equal."

"Mr. Sands is quite a favourite of yours, isn't he, Evie?" said her mother. "I enjoy hearing you two cleveries argue, but I wish you didn't use so many long words."

Eva had passed the London B.A., and both her parents believed that she was a profound scholar.

"Why doesn't Mr. Sands take a degree?" asked her father. "I am sure he knows enough. It would do the Emporium good to have a B.A. on the floor."

"He couldn't, dad; he has only Modern History, but there he is top-hole. Willie Robson got a second-class in History at Oxford, and for Constitutional History read only a boil-down of Stubbs. Mr. Sands knows 'Stubbs's Constitutional History,' the real thing, by heart."

Eva was mistaken. The only thing that Sands knew about "Stubbs's Constitutional History" was that he had read it. He was not at all intellectual really, but he craved the kudos of being considered well read, and treated historical literature as a cinder path whereon he could perform feats of speed and endurance—particularly speed. His time for the three laps of Stubbs has probably never been equalled, but even this was slow to the pace at which he forgot it all. With his tortoise-shell-rimmed glasses and his student's stoop, Mr. Sands was far more of a puppy than Percy Grover.

Hitherto, when Eva had visited her father at the shop, she had approached his office by the left-hand side, which was patrolled by the erudite Sands; but this tea-table talk piquing her curiosity, she gave the right-hand aisle and Mr. Grover the next turn.

Percy radiated welcome. "You don't often honour this aisle, Miss Snell. How has my high-brow colleague, Mr. Sands, offended you? Has he let an issue of *The Mercury* appear without a protest against beginning King Alfred's name without a diphthong?"

All this was very free and easy, Eva thought, but her father would not have his *employés* snubbed, so, like a dutiful girl, she laughed encouragingly. Besides, she had regular teeth.

"I am afraid, Mr. Grover, you don't value scholarship."

"Much of it is the merest lumber. For example, what is gained by knowing the size of an Anglo-Saxon hide? The Anglo-Saxons themselves didn't know, any more than to-day anyone above the age of ten knows what a rod, pole, or perch is. If an Anglo-Saxon wanted land, he bought a hide from one of the little kings, and, if he didn't get good measure, the next time he took his custom to one of the others."

"How absurd you are! I know to an inch what a perch is."

"How much is it?"

"One rod. Fifteen love! But what has turned your thoughts to the Saxon hide?"

"Young Robson was in just now, arguing with Mr. Sands about it. I put it to them that it would be more profitable to learn the dimensions of a modern English acre."

"But surely they knew that?"

"Do you?"

"Well, in a way"

"That is how they knew it. Fifteen all. Robson said it was just over five thousand square somethings—feet or yards, but he didn't know which. Sands would not commit himself to any numbers, but was certain it was yards."

She stood at the bottom of the marble staircase, with a hand on the brass rail. Scores of people passed and stared at them, but there was no pause in the flow of their conversation. On the surface it was mere froth, tossed to and fro, but beneath the spring-tide was running.

"How well you are looking this afternoon, Eva!" said her father, when at last she reached his office. "I wish you always had that colour."

Eva's profile was as good as her father thought his, but she was often cold and colourless.

After this the aisle patrolled by the scholarly Sands saw nothing of Eva, but her visits, now more frequent, to the Emporium made the heart of Percy Grover to blossom like an almond tree. They were not in love, but moving in that direction, with Percy, as was fitting, showing the way.

Acting on a hint from her daughter, Mrs. Snell pressed her husband to invite the young man to Sunday tea.

"Certainly, Sarah, if you think that our having had Mr. Sands gives his colleague the right to expect the same hospitality. But have you considered our dear Eva? Accustomed as she is to the conversation of B.A.'s and LL.B.'s, the trivialities of such an ordinary young man will be very painful to her."

Mrs. Snell thought that dear Eva would survive it.

"Here comes the moustache!" Mr. Snell cried jocularly the following Sunday afternoon, when a knock came at the front door. "That is all you will find him, Eva—a mere moustache."

But when the visitor was ushered into the drawing-room, he was not even that. Since leaving the Emporium on Saturday, Grover had clean-shaved. The effect was appalling. Naturally large and loose, his mouth had been dragged out of shape by its burden and by Percy's trick of tugging at the right side of his moustache when perplexed. The top lip overlapped in the right-hand corner, while on the left the top row teeth were exposed, broken and discoloured by tobacco.

"Whatever have you done to yourself?" cried his hostess. "I shouldn't have known you."

"What do you think of it, Miss Snell?"

Eva could not answer him patiently: he seemed to be sneering at her. "I can't call it an improvement," she replied coldly.

"One comfort, it will soon grow again," said soft-hearted Mrs. Snell.

"I shan't let it grow again—at least, not for many years."

"Oh, but you ought to. This new Mr. Percy Grover you have sprung upon us may be all right—I don't say he isn't—but he is a stranger, and we want our old friend back again."

Mrs. Snell took the young man's right hand between her two hands, podgy and over-ringed, and pressed it affectionately.

"You are always good and kind, Mrs. Snell," he said brokenly.

Every man at the Emporium had a filial regard for this rather commonplace woman, who, after all, had done very little for them. But she was interested in each, and manifestly wished everyone well.

"What does Mrs. Hunter say about it?" asked Eva.

"My sister approves."

"I can't think how she does."

Mrs. Hunter, recently widowed, had just come to live in West Lawton, and shared with Percy a small semi-detached villa in Orwell Road. Her husband, who had been a commercial traveller, had left her two hundred pounds a year. There was a seven-year-old son.

As there was a business side to the young man's altered appearance, Mr. Snell felt himself debarred from discussing it now. But in the morning! A strained situation was eased by the announcement of tea.

At the table Mr. Snell played a favourite part—the jovial host—a little more boisterously than usual to cover his wife's concern and Eva's monosyllabic coldness.

"Are you coming with us to Coverdale Congregational Chapel, Mr. Grover?" asked Mrs. Snell, when they rose from the table. "There is special music to-night—Spohr's 'God, Thou Art Great.'"

"'God, Thou Art Great,' by Spohr," said Benjamin, nodding impressively, as though confirming a salesman's statement that a garment was all wool. "But don't go unless you wish to. I have to stay at home to let Cook out. It is not her Sunday, but she is needed in the choir. Cook has quite a good mezzo voice. Perhaps you would prefer to smoke a cigar with me?"

"I will go to Coverdale with the ladies, please," said Percy hastily. Not for worlds would he be left alone with his employer.

At Mrs. Snell's slow gait the walk to the chapel took twenty minutes, which seemed forty. Eva was silent, and Percy's conversational ventures failed dismally, being discouraged by Mrs. Snell as unsuited to the day. Returning to The Laurels after the service, poor Percy unwittingly fell into deeper disgrace by leaving abruptly after supper, as if to escape family worship, with which the visit should have ended. Percy was quite innocent in this matter. The sudden cessation of talk, which meant that Mr. Snell was about to ring for the servants, was read by the visitor as an intimation that he was outstaying his welcome.

"The modern young man, my dear," said Mr. Snell. "What do you think of him?"

"Oh, don't make a speech, pa!" cried Eva irritably. "There are all kinds of young men to-day, just as there always were."

The impending rebuke was stayed by a meaning glance from Mrs. Snell. There was a quizzical look in her kind eyes when she kissed her daughter "Good night" in the passage.

"Yes, it is humiliating," said Eva, with a hard laugh.

"Nothing worse, dearie?"

"Hope not; let you know in the morning." But she came running down to give the dear old lady a final hug. "There is no harm, truly. What fools we women are!"

Simultaneously Percy and his sister were exchanging confidences. Mrs. Hunter was a tall, deep-bosomed young woman of thirty, extraordinarily vital and vivid. Being dark, she could wear bright colours, and had the courage to continue doing so after

her bereavement, not seeing how it could please the departed that money he had laboriously saved for her comfort should be wasted dressing her most uncomfortably like a familiar of the Inquisition.

"Was it very dreadful, Percy?"

"Dreadful? Not a bit of it. Rather a lark—a very quiet lark, of course."

"Did Mr. Snell say anything?"

"Not a word; he has his innings to-morrow."

"If he insists upon your growing your moustache again, Percy, give way to him, dear. Don't be quixotic. Now, promise!"

"He may not give me a chance. But things will right themselves in the end, Kate. Don't worry, old girl."

He was very bright and chatty in the morning, setting out for the shop. At the door Mrs. Hunter took his face between her hands and kissed him upon each cheek.

The ordeal at the Emporium exceeded his fears. Male colleagues were candid, and their words wounded less than their evident pleasure at the change they condemned.

"Jealous brutes!" he muttered.

Sands alone was aloof and indifferent. To eyes that had watched the folk-moots of the Heptarchy sink into the shire courts of the Norman kings, to re-emerge later in our House of Commons (or Communes), the loss of a moustache, however artistic and military, seemed infinitely unimportant.

Feminine titters accompanied his parade, but one or two of the older girls were visibly distressed. But he walked up and down seemingly as confident as when the right aisle was an avenue of female smiles instead of an endless vista of horrified condemnation.

"He will never be the same again," said a flapper who was folding neckties, "even if he re-grows his moustache. We shall know what it hides. I shall think of it as a bush behind which lurks a wild beast. And I used to think him such a good-looking fellow!"

"He looks just like a swell-mobsman," said Grant, who had deserted gloves to discuss the crisis with old Bode in the boots.

"It will be the street door when Snell sees him," said Bode. "I wonder what keeps the old man this morning?"

"Some woman, Bode—some lovely woman. Oh, he's a gay old bird is Snell!"

They laughed boisterously.

Young Grant's profane suggestion had hit the mark. Snell *was* delayed by a woman. But when he did arrive at the Emporium, events moved rapidly. Percy was summoned to the presence. The young women who had sniffed before now used their handkerchiefs openly.

"We have seen the last of him," said Bode. "At this very moment friend Percy is receiving a cheque in lieu of notice."

But as he spoke the shop-walker was seen descending the staircase to resume his patrol.

"Get on with what you have in hand, young ladies. There seems to be a great deal of chattering this morning. Mr. Grant, why are you away from your department?"

No, Percy had not been sacked; on the contrary, he seemed in high favour. Twice he was granted leave of absence, and on each occasion a cheque for five guineas was handed to him. The counting house told the Manchester goods department that these cheques were drawn in favour of Sir Max Handley. The name conveyed nothing.

But Percy did not hold his ground with his customers. His floor supremacy was gone. Very definitely now he played second fiddle to Mr. Sands. Rebelling against this, he conceived the wild idea of beating Sands on his own ground. On his next visit to Town he consulted an intelligent bookseller. A week or so later he bowled Sands out with a quotation from "The Saxon Chronicle." Sands tried to come back at him with Kemble's "History of the Anglo-Saxons," for which he held the remarkable reading record of five days seventeen and a half hours, but Percy blocked this easily.

"I prefer to go to the sources of history, and not to waste time on compilations."

Sands was appalled. The loss of a moustache was more important than he had thought. The sooner their erstwhile Adonis recovered his good looks and returned to his natural *rôle*, the better it would be for sound scholarship. He tackled the boss the first time he could catch him alone. Mr. Snell admitted that the change in Grover's appearance was for the worse, that customers who had been won by Percy's jokes and familiarity were now often offended, that it was injuring business, but refused to interfere—*the shop must stand the loss.*

"You needn't look so amazed, Mr. Sands. For reasons that can't be made public, it would not be right for me to coerce or threaten

Mr. Grover. Is it the first time I have put another's interests before my own ? "

Mr. Sands did not respond properly. Students are rarely diplomats. Obviously he was troubled at being asked to associate disinterestedness with his employer. His hesitation stabbed.

" Surely," soliloquised Benjamin, " this can't be my first act of self-sacrifice." He could not recall another in business ; but at home, in the Church ?

" Let us have some instances from any side of your life," demanded Conscience, which had been suddenly awakened from a prolonged hibernation. The draper promised to meet this challenge at a more seasonable



" 'Well, my little man,' said Mr. Snell kindly, when the men had joined the child on the landing, 'do you know who I am, eh ?'"

opportunity. He found this in chapel the following morning, when he set himself to recall past deeds of self-sacrifice. Bother those words! The terms of the reference were too onerous.

After tea he walked round to Orwell Road. Percy, in his shirt-sleeves, answered the door.

"Well, Percy, I have called to see the cause of all this trouble."

"You haven't chosen the best time, sir. My sister is at St. Augustine's, and I am just putting my young master to bed. He is in one of his tantrums, refusing to be washed. Ah, Willie, you naughty boy, run back to the bathroom!"

But Willie held his ground on the landing. He was Mrs. Hunter's child unmistakably. He had her profile and colour, but not her proud carriage. His brown eyes, which had the appeal of a dog's, held a suggestion of confusion, of hesitation and retarded development. His cheeks were stained with lines of tears and treacle.

"Well, my little man," said Mr. Snell kindly, when the men had joined the child on the landing, "do you know who I am, eh?"

Willie's jaw dropped, and he sheltered behind his uncle.

"He can't understand you, sir, and that always frightens him. There, there, Willie, no one wishes to hurt you! Perhaps you won't mind, sir, waiting downstairs in the front room for a few minutes. You won't make any fuss about being washed now, Willie?"

"No! No! No!" cried the child, in the presence of a possible enemy frightened of alienating his friend.

When Percy came down, he found his employer reading.

"You didn't see my nephew at his best, sir. I had forgotten your moustache, or I would not have taken you upstairs. At the stage he has reached he can understand talkers if their mouths are visible, and they speak very slowly. But it seems to hurt and frighten him that there are people he can't understand."

"Was he able to understand you directly you shaved off your moustache?"

"There is a knack in speaking to the deaf, but I soon acquired it."

"It is very fortunate for Mrs. Hunter that there is such a famous Deaf and Dumb Institute and School at her very door; otherwise she would have had to part with her child."

"That is why she came to live in West Lawton, sir. For a year Willie was a boarder at this West Lawton school. My brother-in-law's business kept him in Manchester."

"I am sorry the Harley Street specialist I sent you to could do nothing."

"But the consultations satisfied Kate that everything possible was being done for the little chap. She wishes to thank you for your great generosity and forbearance."

"You have said all that is needed."

"And we both," said Percy, "should beg your pardon for misjudging you utterly. We thought you had an eye for nothing but the interests of the shop, and never imagined that the fact of my clean-shaving being a duty would make you my ally."

"Not your act won me, my boy, but the way it was presented to me."

"I don't remember, sir, stating my case particularly well."

"You! Why, you stammered and grinned as if you had been caught robbing a till. If your case that Monday morning had depended upon *your* presentation of it, you would have left by the side door with a cheque for a month's salary in your breast-pocket. No, when I called you in, the battle had been already won for you by your sister."

"This is the first I have heard of it. Kate wished to call on you, but I forbade it."

"Well, it is a good job for you Mrs. Hunter was disobedient. She caught us at breakfast. I can tell you she dressed your window for you properly. You didn't resemble a till robber in her narrative. 'But Percy saw my afflicted child and had compassion upon him.' Into that sentence she threw a pathos that I, trained reciter as I am and platform speaker, could not have surpassed. That is what kept your crib open, my boy—not your fine act, but Mrs. Hunter's effective display of it. There is a lecture that I have delivered at Mutual Improvement Societies in half the suburbs—'Window-Dressing; or, Young Man, Make the Most of Yourself.' Next time I give it I must take you with me; it will give just the stimulus you need. Why, this act of yours, given proper publicity, would have made you a greater favourite with the ladies than ever. But you hide it under the counter."

"If our shop really were an emporium," said Percy sulkily (he never could take

adverse criticism patiently), "it would contain merchandise that cannot be handled and pawed about, fruits whose bloom is easily destroyed. A fine deed praised has lost its bloom."

"I have made it my care that you should not suffer materially. Have you felt the change very much otherwise?"

"Women rather shun me now, sir, but that is nothing to my loss of interest in myself. Before, even if things went wrong with me, they were interesting as happening to an attractive personality. I had a picture of a splendid fellow suffering undeservedly. Now there are no pictures." He pointed to his reflection in the overmantel. "How can you make a picture of that? Well, don't let us talk any more about me. By Jove, I had no idea it was so late! Kate will be back any minute. You are not leaving, sir? I thought you were staying to supper. Please do; my sister has so much to say to you."

"No! No! I must go at once."

Percy gave him a hand with his overcoat and let him out.

"Good-bye. You must not think, my dear boy, I was finding fault just now. 'You're a better man than I am, Gunda Gin.'"

Mr. Snell hurried off without looking back. To people ignorant of the facts it might appear that he was running away.

"I am not running away from Mrs. Hunter," he said firmly, and changed his fast hobble, for which he would have been instantly disqualified at Stamford Bridge, to a fair heel-and-toe three and a half miles an hour. When he made the change, he had just passed St. Augustine's.

Percy made another appearance at The Laurels. The ladies were all kindness. Again he accompanied them to Coverdale. Eva went into the choir. She gave him a bright smile as she tripped away, but there was a queer little pain in her heart.

"'All the king's horses and all the king's men,'" she said to herself ruefully. Percy Grover was a much better man than she had any reason for believing him to be when she first had him invited to tea. But if he had come then moustached, as she had expected him, she would not have gone off to the choir, but have sat by his side in the family pew, and with a grave pleasure have handed him the service books and heard his voice against her own in the hymns. A fine act finely done! But what did it weigh against the loss of a few hairs on the upper lip?

Percy returned home in very low spirits. "I felt all the time, Kate," he said bitterly, "that Eva was respecting me."

"Willie is still awake," said Kate. "He won't go to sleep, dear, until you have said good-night."

IN THE HEART OF WINTER.

THE keen air
Said to the sun:
"Let us join together,
And be as one."

A joyous wind
Leapt from the blast;
They caught him by his curls of gold
And held him fast.

These three
Merged, and fell away;
And in the heart of winter
Was a perfect day.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

THE WOOL-GATHERER

By WATSON DYKE

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

SPRING was in the air, even in the Bilhampton Lending Library.

Miss Lena Daglish had brought three primroses, which she placed in a small glass on the counter where she passed books over—mostly novels by authors who wrote about lovers. Mr. Bywell, who was in the reference library, paused to talk with her before he retired into the solemn room. Miss Daglish was the favourite in the library—that is to say, from the masculine point of view. She had lovely golden hair, which was braided across her forehead and which gave her the appearance of a crowned head. Of course there was Miss Leatherbarrow. Miss Leatherbarrow was a recent addition. She looked about twenty-eight years old. She did not wear those fresh-coloured blouses with which Miss Daglish brightened the book world; she had a propensity to make mistakes. Miss Daglish was unerring in her work, and that was in itself the reason why the librarian, Mr. Shadwell Jonson, Park Avenue, The Suburbs, West End, always felt, as he looked at her, that things were safe—that nothing could happen to the library other than good while that fair, smiling, radiant-eyed Lena Daglish held the gates of the counter.

It was Monday. Primroses were coming out in sheltered places, and that was why Miss Daglish had three to place in a glass. Mr. Shadwell Jonson made the remark, "Out of your garden, Miss Daglish?" as he went through the counter gates. He said nothing to anyone else. Miss Leatherbarrow was looking up some back newspapers of the local print, for a working man who was anxious to get it before nine-thirty. She was so nervous that she dropped them on the floor. Mr. Shadwell Jonson did not mean to be unkind, but if he had known how to put Miss Leatherbarrow in limbo, it would have been where he would have put her for ever and ever. Her incompetency fitted her for limbo—she seemed too superior for the workhouse. He wondered why—well, there was too much to be done to waste time over Miss Leatherbarrow. He seized his correspondence.

He was immersed and happy.

He meant to raise Miss Daglish's salary before evening, and, as certain as daylight following night, Mr. Jonson had no other plan in his head, and yet before lights were lit in the reference room—and they were lit earlier there than anywhere else in the library, as it was the short-sighted people who loved referring—he had forgotten to raise Miss Daglish's salary, and he had given Miss Leatherbarrow a month's notice instead.

The great man has said: "Nothing is certain but the unforeseen."

Mr. Shadwell Jonson daily recognised that even the most consistent people act out of order.

But Miss Leatherbarrow began the trouble, of course. Would there be any trouble in the world if there were no Leatherbarrow people, male or female? The sound of crackling newspapers plagued everybody within her vicinity for the first half-hour, as she folded and straightened them and put them in place after the working man had gone. Then she had some letters to write, and Mr. Bywell had come out of the reference library with some bit of work for her. (She did all the bits of other people's work, and it confused her.) Finally Mr. Shadwell Jonson had asked her to write two letters for him—only two. He gave her a short *résumé* of what she was to say, and left her to do them.

Lunch for Jonson was at one o'clock. It consisted of coffee and sandwiches, eaten with a friend in a *café* near Bilhampton Church. Why the church is mentioned will be easily understood by Bilhampton people. They will know the delightful quiet *café*, and understand more fully the character of a man like Shadwell Jonson.

Jonson, on his way to the beloved and tranquil *café*, espied Miss Leatherbarrow folding the written letters to place in the envelopes.

"One moment!" he said sharply. "Let me see what you are doing."

To this day he cannot tell why he stopped her. He took the letters from her hand and glanced over them. An irritable tinge of red rose up on his forehead, and some light strands of silvery black hair lifted themselves from the baldness of his further brow.

One of the letters was not dated. The



Mr. Shadwell Jonson.

other was dated September! And it was springtime!

"Are you ill, Miss Leatherbarrow?"

"I am very well," said Miss Leatherbarrow anxiously.

"Then to what am I to refer—this—this incoherence?" he called out.

His voice was so strung up with exasperation that Mr. Bywell peeped out of the depths of the reference library, but fell back upon some immense tomes, through which he was wandering, with the ejaculation "Tish!"

Miss Leatherbarrow tremblingly seized the letters from the librarian's hand, saying: "Good Heavens, what have I done?"

The librarian searched her face in hopes of getting a clue, but the only remark she made was: "I don't see what I've done."

She was looking pitifully at him.

"Done!" he hissed. "You are practically no use in *this* or any other office! Done! You're wool-gathering! When did wool-gathering pay? Never in this world!"

Miss Leatherbarrow listened like one petrified, her expression settling into despair. She sank back into her seat by the table, and began to move her fingers clumsily amongst the papers.

Mr. Shadwell Jonson picked up one of his reindeer gloves, which he had dropped in dismay on discovering the undated and ancient dated letters. He was about to walk away, when Miss Leatherbarrow stopped him. "I—I understand—you would like me to give a month's notice?"

"I should think it would be best for you



Miss Lena Daglish.

as well as for me. I think you are unfitted for the business world. I do not know whether housekeeping makes a less trenchant pull on the clearness and correctness of the mind."

"I understand. I should prefer to leave at once."

"Good morning," he said sharply, and went out into the street, as provoked as he ever was in all his life. The way she had thrown up her duties was almost shocking in its tragic baldness.

Extraordinary minds people have, and pull through the world somehow!

Mr. Bywell came out of the reference library and talked it over with Miss Daglish. When they had said their ditty to one another, Miss Daglish approached Miss Leatherbarrow.

"Why did you give notice? He would have cooled down when the letters had gone off all right."

"I can see what a trial I am to—to all concerned."

"Do you mind me asking you—what made you go so far astray in the dating? I'm dreadfully curious, I know."

"Something that happened this morning."

"Do tell me."

"You won't understand."

"Try me. I'll never understand those letters else."

"My home affairs aren't happy. My mother's life——"

"Oh, she's ill, is she? Did you sit up last night?"

"No, nothing to speak of, only——"

"She will get better, won't she?"

Miss Daglish's voice faltered now, the briskness leaving it, and Miss Leatherbarrow's two hands covered her face as she said: "She may live till September."

Miss Daglish's strong white fingers clasped Miss Leatherbarrow's wrist as she said: "You shan't leave for *that* mistake!"

"Yes, I'm determined to leave. You must never let him know the real reason, or I'll never forgive you. Besides, I'm a wool-gatherer—it'll happen for anything. If I meet a beggar and have nothing to give him, I forget where I am, and go past our own gate. The world has no use for wool-gatherers."

"What a pity!" said Lena Daglish. "To help people it is best to be practical; that sort of straying grief does no good."

"Perhaps you are right," said Miss Leatherbarrow. "I am inclined to listen to you, for you are true and sympathetic. I am going, and will not come back again. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, dear," said Miss Lena Daglish thoughtfully.

She was watching the dreamy way in which Miss Leatherbarrow gathered together her possessions.

Mr. Bywell came up to Miss Daglish.

"Gone, has she?"

"Poor thing—yes."

"For good?"

"Yes. She says so."

"Very incompetent," said Roger Bywell. "It almost seems sometimes as if she were purposefully tiresome, but I believe Miss Leatherbarrow can't help it."

II.

Miss Leatherbarrow took some lunch in town, for she felt very exhausted with the morning's turn of events. When she came out into the street at half-past one, she felt cheered with the prospect of going home to her mother. Plans chased themselves through her mind—work that could be done at home—until September.

After September there were no plans.

She came to Lulworth Bridge—a famous bridge with a beautiful view of Lulworth River, either side you chose to stop and take a look. Miss Leatherbarrow's eyes turned west, and she watched some craft on the water, saw misty green buds on the willows, and looked into the depth of the blue sky above her. A dreadful hard cough sounded close beside her. She looked, and saw that it came from a young man who was in the last stages of consumption.

He was exhausted—almost to death—by the coughing fit that had got hold of him. He clung to the parapet of the bridge.

Miss Leatherbarrow turned to him.

"You are very ill," she said.

"You are—quite, *quite* right," he said earnestly.

"Is there no one with you?"

He shook his head in an airy manner. "I belong to no one, and no one belongs to me." He began to laugh, and the laughing ended again in the awful cough.

"For the moment you belong to your neighbour," said Miss Leatherbarrow firmly, "that's certain. Won't you come into this little *café* and have something to eat? I've just had my dinner there, and the people know me, and they'll give you a comfortable chair and a rest."

"Hush! Don't look so kind. I'm steeling myself for the natural end. Now you look frightened. I'm not going to anticipate what Nature is doing so thoroughly. I will come with you—to that kind place where there is a welcome. The warmth tempts me."

Miss Leatherbarrow took his weak and trembling arm and assisted him into the shop. A rosy-cheeked girl with a pleasant face had soon got them seats near the big fire. The young man spread out his transparent hands and smiled at the blaze.

Miss Leatherbarrow called for refreshments.

Meanwhile he said to her: "I'll be very frank. I'm practically at the last gasp

When you came up to me, life or death was of no importance, but I want something out of *this* world now—a simple little thing—to know your name."

A peculiar expression came over Miss Leatherbarrow's face. It was a dry look.

"Miss Wool-Gatherer," she said coldly.

"Wool-Gatherer?" he repeated. "Really? I never heard of it as surname before. Miss Wool-Gatherer? It will mean a good warm fleece for many a cold shoulder, I'll be bound!"

Tears came into Miss Leatherbarrow's eyes. "No," she said, "it means one of those kind of people who make mistakes and forget things."

"Blessed mistakes and kind forgettings," he said. "I'm dying, you know," he added. "I can say rather more than one who thinks to live another fifty years. I must lower my voice, or the *café* will turn me out for the ambulance and hospital. A merciless world."

She passed him the toast. He shook his head. "For fear of my cough—no," he whispered. "I haven't a friend in this world or the next—except you."

"Yes, you have. Don't speak as if you didn't believe in God."

"God!" he said, and bit his lips. "I have a brother and a mother in this town. God gave them to me, I suppose. I could never live their life. Our values were all astray; what was sacred to one was not to the other. There it was! At last, in desperation, I went off. I've come back to look at the river from the bridge before I die."

"Are they still here?"

"I have no interest in them."

"I implore you to go to them now. Just to see you will change all their coldness to love."

"Oh, don't!" he said. "I've starved so long that words of—of—something—different to—to—— Oh, I say, let's talk of something else!"

Miss Leatherbarrow got up from the table and went and spoke to the pleasant girl about some jelly. She was gone a few moments, and when she came back her face was full of confidence.

"Yes, you must go home. They'll be breaking their hearts secretly—that's what is done in families. Pride keeps them separated."

"What is their love worth?" he said.

"Them—and worth the effort," said Miss Leatherbarrow.

"I can't make it. I'm finished," he said. And then the jelly came, and, talking over other things, an hour drifted away like a minute.

They came out together to find the clock of Bilhampton Church striking three. The young man had a colour, and walked with more strength. Miss Leatherbarrow was looking rather grey in the face, as though preoccupied with anxiety.

She was so abstracted that if the hand of the young man had not caught her sleeve to detain her she would have been under a motor. "Miss Wool-Gatherer," he said, "if you'll walk home like a sane person, watching the traffic, I'll go home, too."

"You will? I'd given up all hope. You will?"

"Oh, I will! It is worth while, I assure you. Good-bye, Miss Wool-Gatherer!"

"Good-bye, and thank you again and again! I feel quite content."

He laughed, the rattling laugh that generally led to the cough. They looked earnestly at one another and went in opposite directions.

III.

Mr. Shadwell Jonson always arrived home at the exact moment the clocks were striking six. Eliza knew it so thoroughly that she put the potatoes into boiling water on that minute, and at precisely half-past six mother and son sat down to their modest dinner. Mrs. Jonson was usually a chilly person, and wore a white shawl over her black gown, and she was often depressed in spirits. It was Shadwell's duty to cheer her in the evening—that is to say, if it were not a University Extension lecture, the St. George's Presbyterian Literary Society meeting, or a Shakespeare play at Bilhampton Playhouse. He was naturally very much in evidence at such evening affairs, and felt it a duty to be there—the duty of the librarian of Bilhampton Library.

Life is made up of such duties.

Duty in Mr. Jonson's life was pleasure—his highest pleasure. No one but a similar nature to his own could understand the unconfined joy that swelled his breast when, the cold world shut out, the Bilhampton Library swallowed him up for the day. The few hours in the morning and evening were generally borne with that patience which belongs to a self-controlled nature, and the trials of his mother's perpetually depressed temperament were soothed by the reading of such pamphlets as the literary

supplement to *The Times*, *The Athenæum*, *The Bookman*, and *The Outlook*. Eli a was everything that either mother or son could have dreamed of in the way of maid-servant. The only thing she could not bear, and would not endure, was uncertainty and irregularity in the system of the household. Mr. Shadwell Jonson placed her very close to Miss Daglish in his feeling of that certain good accruing from her presence to the whole house. Women have that value when they are dependable; to think of them departing spells disaster. Eliza knew it, and strengthened her position, fortifying it for life by womanly strategy.

To-night, when dinner was served, and mother and son were alone again, she said to him: "You look tired, dear?"

He raised his eyebrows. "A trifle. Curious thing how some people are so uncertain. You remember Miss Leatherbarrow?"

"Yes, yes," said his mother brightly. "That day the snowstorm came, and I stayed an hour in the library, she was goodness itself."

"I dare say," he laughed drily. "She's very good at every duty but the one in hand."

"It answered very well for me, my dear. I've often thought since that I would have had bronchitis but for her. She took off my boots with her own hands and dried them in the reference room by that big library fire. Mr. Bywell always keeps the fire so good in there."

"Miss Leatherbarrow is going—in fact, she is gone."

"Oh!"

"She had occasion to write two letters for me, and got the dates mixed. Of course I explained to her about the importance of these things. She simply left the work there and then. All out of order, you know. These things should be done in order. However, you can't make grapes out of thorns."

"Poor Miss Leatherbarrow! I rather liked her, Shad. I'd like to have her about me—daily."

Shadwell Jonson groaned at the thought.

"At any rate," he said sharply, "she merely anticipated what would have come eventually."

He carved some meat, and silence fell over the two people. The bell rang, and Eliza was heard going to the door. It was raining now, the soft constant rain that falls in spring. Hasty steps were heard, Eliza calling something, and then the door burst open, and a young man came in



"He was exhausted—almost to death—by the coughing fit that

swiftly, yet with a shakiness of steps that told its own tale. He threw off his dripping hat upon the uncut *Athenæum* lying on the sofa, which made Shadwell Jonson wince even in that hour of reunion.

Mother and son were face to face once more after the silence, on the part of the youngest one, amounting to eight long years. He had gone at eighteen, and he was now twenty-six.

"Mother!" he said vehemently.

He stood there looking at her, and even in that earliest moment she recognised death in the blue-veined high forehead, the glassy eye, the silky hair laid damply on the brow. She had not yet heard him cough.



had got hold of him. He clung to the parapet of the bridge."

"It's Arthur!" she cried, rising with a half sob.

"Arthur!" said Shadwell, and the word seemed to break in his utterance.

Arthur flung his arms round his mother's neck, and soon she was sobbing out: "Oh, my boy, you've come back—come back at last!"

"I ought to have ordered a committee to prepare you for to-day," said Arthur, looking at Shadwell. "I'm all out of place."

"It would perhaps have been better to have——" began Shadwell, but the words stuck there. He heard the cough.

Eliza was standing at the door. "I'll light a fire in Mr. Arthur's room," she said.

He turned round and took her hands. "Eliza!" was all he uttered, and she turned away quickly as if she could not bear it.

Shadwell made him sit down in the big easy-chair in front of the fire, and took off his coat, and put cushions behind his head. Mrs. Jonson undid his collar as he began to cough, distress written on her face.

"Oh, that cough!" he said. "My best friend——"

"Hush, Arthur!"

"Yes, mother, forgive me! I see—how you feel—and—and—Shadwell—come here, Shadwell!"

Shadwell came at once, with nervous steps, close to his brother, so close that Arthur buttonholed his coat and brought his lips to those long-sealed older ears.

"Say, Shadwell, you'd never have seen me in this world but for a lady I met to-day. I'm as difficult to change as you are. I was unforgiving—still thinking myself right. But she broke down my rules of right and wrong. . . . I just did it to please her—and now I see she was right—both of you, I see—meant less—than you said—no doubt like me——"

"Arthur," cried his mother, "you might know I was fretting for you—all this time!"

"I, too," interrupted Shadwell in a voice that was cold and icy.

"Then why didn't you let me live my life here as well as yours, Shadwell? Never mind, I'll say no more! Still working committees? How many new departments in the library? There, I'm ragging you—the old, old way! Forgive the temper, Shad and let's get on—to the—end!"

He fell back panting.

Shadwell Jonson, with an altered face, went off for a stimulant. Returning with a glass, he besought his brother to take a sip.



"They came out together to find the clock of Bilhampton Church striking three."

But the poor fellow had fainted.

"Take the brandy for rubbing his lips," said his mother.

Presently Arthur came round with a shudder, to find Shadwell getting into an overcoat to go for the doctor.

"Shad," he said, "listen to me. I'm a believer in Providence, for in the midst of my misery, who sent that good woman to pull me up by the right hand?"

"What was her name?" said Jonson.

"Her name? She was a Miss Wool-Gatherer," said Arthur, with a faint smile.

Shadwell buttoned his coat unnecessarily tight about the throat, and went out muttering in a disturbed voice—

"What did I say this morning in the library to Miss Leatherbarrow? Something about wool-gathering. Words always return again, some way."

* * * * *

When the librarian returned with the doctor, the end was come, for Arthur's last fit of coughing was followed with the breaking of a blood-vessel.

He died very peacefully, holding his mother's hand, and Shadwell was supporting his weary young shoulders, a new occupation for the man of system.

"If I could only find Miss Wool-Gatherer!" said Shadwell to his mother.

"I am afraid you will never do that," she replied; "those sort of people are hard to find. Besides, Shadwell, life is very strange. One kind action from another is often only repaid by returning it to someone else. Put yourself out to benefit another, such as that poor dear Miss Leatherbarrow, and you may repay the loving-kindness of the woman we will never know."

"I would rather repay Miss Wool-Gatherer!" said Shadwell testily; "it is a more orderly and correct method of payment. Yes, it makes me say it—I would give half the library to repay Miss Wool-Gatherer!"

Mrs. Jonson said nothing, but the look she gave her son was full of astonishment.

"Send for Miss Leatherbarrow!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Take her back again and wrestle with her faults."

"Miss Leatherbarrow!" he repeated scornfully.

She said no more.

IV.

SHE sat in the empty sitting-room with folded hands.

The small maid-of-all-work clattered about in the kitchen. She was trying to cheer Miss Leatherbarrow with domestic sounds, such as the breaking of sticks and the other evening duties. It was desolate and sad since Mrs. Leatherbarrow had died just a month ago.

But Miss Leatherbarrow, although aware that she had no occupation, and must immediately fill the want, sat on in this chill reverie, so deeply sunk in it that the door-bell was not heard by her, nor the small maid's high voice as she allowed someone to enter the passage.

A knock at the door, and a high voice calling out "Mr. Jonson, miss!" aroused her to the presence of a visitor.

Miss Leatherbarrow was amazed to see the librarian in her small sitting-room.

She found a seat for him, and, as it was getting dusk, lit the lamp and pulled down the blinds.

"I have come straight from the library," said Mr. Jonson, looking at his watch. "I left a quarter of an hour earlier. I have just ten minutes to talk with you."

"Would you like to leave your watch on the table?" said Miss Leatherbarrow anxiously. "You see, our clock isn't going."

"I see," said the librarian sternly. "I think I can calculate it," he added—"I mean the time I can give you."

"I'll try and remind you," said Miss Leatherbarrow nervously.

A very far-away smile flickered to the mouth of the librarian of Bilhampton Library.

There was silence.

"The rain continues," said Miss Leatherbarrow.

"It does," said the librarian. "I am calling here to-day at the request of several ladies."

"Are you?" inquired Miss Leatherbarrow.

"Yes. My mother is one. You remember Miss Daglish, perhaps?"

"Yes."

"She also wishes it. It seems you are missed at the library."

"Missed?" echoed Miss Leatherbarrow. She was so surprised that she dropped her work-basket to the floor, and the librarian found himself engaged in the unfamiliar task of putting all the little nothings by which a lady surrounds her needle into a very old basket. "Yes," he said, as he continued to find herring-boned needle-cases, broken and serviceable thimbles, spools of silk, bits of elastic, buttons of all patterns. "Yes, they want you to come back, if you are still disengaged."

"I am at liberty, but——" She hesitated.

The librarian had it on his lips to ask if the salary deterred her, but caution, the economical caution of years of office, made him wait for her to speak for herself.

"I cannot promise to be infallible," said Miss Leatherbarrow, staring hard at him, because the moment's issue was so fearfully important.

The librarian of Bilhampton Library nearly burst out laughing, but his detestation of emotion of any sort produced a cough instead, and he remarked in a voice that shook slightly: "As to that, Miss Leatherbarrow, I am perfectly aware that it is almost impossible for you to docket things in your mind. I may say that I, too, like my mother and Miss Daglish, have a desire that you should return, if you are willing to do so. They seem to miss your personal presence, so do the children who are in the reading-room; but I have an axe to grind, I confess without more ado."

"An axe to grind?" repeated Miss Leatherbarrow.

"Since I saw you," said Jonson, "I have had reason to think out something to its bitter end, and to get no fruit as the result of it. Perhaps you may not know that I have lost a brother—found him—and lost him. He left home—left home—years ago. I—and I—may have been limited in my knowledge of human nature, its variety, its different duties—the supplies it brings to so many different and equally important channels. Perhaps the field of my work has absorbed me too entirely. Wordsworth put it inimitably 'Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers, etc.'—you will finish the quotation for yourself, Miss Leatherbarrow. However—in brief—it seems that my dear young brother was persuaded to go home in his last extremity through the agency of an angelic womanly creature who foresaw what sorrow his absence would bring us. He came—for her. He stayed—for us! He was reunited to his mother."

"He lives?" said Miss Leatherbarrow.

"He died," said Jonson.

"But he lives," said Miss Leatherbarrow softly.

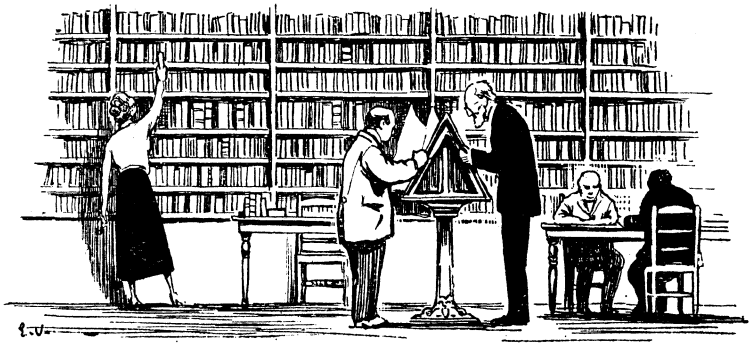
There was silence again, and Jonson broke it slowly, as though he felt his own voice jarred on him.

"I have never been able to find the lady who thus aided him to break with the past silence. For the sake of that lady I am prepared to wrestle with your unsystematic—and I must confess it—very annoying carelessness; for her sake I will try to make a sound platform for you to work upon, so that you shall not break down, and cause the staff to break down, at unexpected moments. I want you to make up your mind to give me your full attention on this matter, for it is Miss Wool-Gatherer alone to whom you must give any thanks—if you are at all pleased to return to Bilhampton Library!"

He pulled out his watch. "Five minutes over time! Good evening, Miss Leatherbarrow. I'll expect you on Monday."

He snatched up the reindeer gloves and he went out without receiving an answer or good-bye, for Miss Leatherbarrow's face he had not seen, and the smile on it had nothing to do with Monday and the library.

"So he died in his mother's arms," she whispered. "Happy, happy end!"



ACCOMMODATING ANNE

By PAULA HUDD

ILLUSTRATED BY WYNDHAM ROBINSON

LADY FERRARD was a worldly woman.

It is regrettable that this story should have to begin with that statement, but if Lady Ferrard had not been worldly, it is probable that there would not have been any story at all, which adds to, or detracts from, Lady Ferrard's shortcoming according as a story finds value in your eyes.

Sir John Ferrard's outstanding characteristic might, on the other hand, have been described as other-worldliness. His absorbing hobby had been astronomy, though his fortune came from cheese—a very delectable cheese done up in little silver paper packets adorned on one side with a blue bird on a white label, and on the other side with a red-lettered command: "Always insist on the Bluebird Brand. Refuse all substitutes."

The blue bird had been Sir John's own little conceit, but Lady Ferrard was responsible for the red-lettered command.

Sir John, in the days when he had been plain John Ferrard, in charge of his father's cheese factory, had, so to speak, run up against Susan Travers at a Royal Geographical Society reception. Susan Travers was, even in her youth, a large woman to run up against, and—possibly because the encounter caused him to see more stars—John unexpectedly fell in love with her and married her.

The union had been a very happy one, after all. While John had his head among the stars, Susan was busy with the silver-wrapped cheese idea. Her husband came down to earth for one inspired moment to suggest the blue bird label, and then withdrew once more.

The advent of a son—a particularly beautiful boy who seemed to have stolen two of his father's pet planets for eyes—brought John back again for a long while.

They named him John Gregory, and it was not until the fortune and the knighthood came along that the elder John again sought refuge from the clamours of the world among his beloved stars. He died in his sleep when the young John was in his last year at Cambridge.

Thereupon Lady Ferrard sold the cheese business and bought an estate for her son to come home and manage.

He was managing it well, and Lady Ferrard was building high and worldly hopes as to his marriage later on, when the letter about Anne appeared beside her plate at breakfast one morning.

The letter was from a firm of solicitors—an extremely well-established firm of solicitors, otherwise Lady Ferrard would certainly not have allowed her omelette to get cold while she perused their communication.

Anne, it appeared, was the daughter of Lady Eileen Conyers, an earl's daughter whom Susan had assiduously cultivated in her school-days, until she (Lady Eileen) had made the fatal error of marrying an obscure veterinary surgeon.

It appeared that the widowed Lady Eileen had died, leaving her daughter sixty pounds a year, and had requested her solicitors to see if her old friend Lady Ferrard would have Anne to live with her.

The solicitors informed Lady Ferrard that Anne was an extremely cultured young lady, who had just obtained an Arts Degree at Girton. They trusted that Lady Ferrard would see her way to carrying out her old friend's dying wish.

Lady Ferrard was not disposed to see her way in that direction. Sixty pounds

a year was simply pin-money, and Lady Eileen had been a very pretty girl. A probably pretty and practically penniless Anne did not fit in with Lady Ferrard's plans at all. On the other hand, she possessed a conventional conscience which was, in the end, solely responsible for the advent of Anne.

Lady Ferrard wrote a letter that really amounted to an acceptance, on conditions. In effect—though not in so many words—Anne was given to understand that she might come, providing she undertook not to entangle Jack Ferrard, for whom greater things were intended.

Anne wrote a correct little note of thanks, giving the day and time of her arrival. She explained that, as she was continuing her studies, she hoped Lady Ferrard would not find her too much in the way, and that she intended eventually to get a post, so that she would not have to trespass on her hostess's hospitality too long—all of which found great approval in Lady Ferrard's eyes, and, as a consequence, she went so far as to suggest that Jack should break his invariable rule and make a point of being at home for tea in order to greet Anne.

So the scene was set correctly for Anne's arrival. A log fire blazed in the hall, Lady Ferrard, resplendent in black silk, sat with a daintily laden tea-table at hand, while Jack paced about, eagerly anticipating the arrival of a girl to break the monotony.

There came the sound of wheels on the drive, the butler passed through the hall and flung the door open, and Anne stepped into the firelight.

At sight of her Lady Ferrard's last doubts as to the wisdom of possessing a conventional conscience were set at rest, while Jack's eyes played traitor to his smile.

For Anne was plain—hopelessly, undeniably plain. She was clad in an ugly brown costume short enough to reveal a pair of large, sensibly shod feet. Her hair hung in dank wisps from under her hard brown felt hat, and the possibility of her grey eyes was lost because of the light, scanty eyebrows above them.

Jack murmured a formal "How d'you do?" and, with his eyes on the window, made a mental vow to be out in the open again before the business of tea commenced.

He had been looking forward to a girl's arrival with almost passionate eagerness. There was much of his father's temperament in him, though many of his habits of thought were formed by constant contact with his mother.

He had been conscious lately of a curious unrest, of a groping after mental stimulation, and he had built a great deal on the coming of this girl.

In all his dreams she had been beautiful. She had talked books and poetry with him, and tramped by his side along the high-hedged lanes and across the earthy-scented fields. She had gone through the stables in her high boots and her dark riding kit, and had been all over the farm with him in something tweedy that had the colour of heather. And in the evenings she had worn white, a soft pearly sort of white for which the old oak in the dining-room made a fitting background; after dinner she sang, with only the lamp on the piano making a pool of light round her, and all the rest of the drawing-room dark save for the firelight. . . . And later he would give her her candle at the bottom of the stairs, and touch her fingers as she said "Good night." A night might come, perhaps, when they would linger, and she would bend to kiss him. . . .

And now this!

But outside the February twilight was making a miracle of a muddy pool, and a ribbon of gold threaded the grey mists in the western sky. He would go out. . . .

Anne was speaking to his mother, and, as he became conscious of her voice, his vow was broken almost as soon as it was made.

For that much of Anne was altogether beautiful.

* * * * *

From that moment the story becomes very much the affair of Anne and Jack—Anne with her lank hair and her meant-to-be-pretty eyes, and her ugly high-necked shirt blouses, Jack with his wholly attractive appearance, and his curious mixture of inherent idealism and surface materialism, the one his father's gift to him, the other his mother's demand of him.

Anne talked books with him, to be sure, intelligent talk that left him rather cold. She walked the lanes and tramped the fields, and went through the stables and over the farm, but the riding kit and the heather-coloured tweed and the pearl-white frock were all part of a beautiful dream that grew fainter in the light of this matter-of-fact reality.

Only sometimes at night, when Anne sat at the piano in the lamp-light, he would

go away into the darkest corner of the drawing-room and close his eyes until his dream-girl came to him and held her candle to be lit.

"What sort of a post are you going to get?" Jack asked.

Anne looked up at him quickly and then away again.



"'It—it isn't the sort of frock that—that crushes easily,' said Anne."

One day he asked Anne about her plans for the future, and thereby stumbled upon a new aspect of her.

It was a wonderful golden and grey March twilight, and they were tramping over a hill-top towards home and tea.

"What do you think I might do?" she queried.

Jack had no very original suggestions to offer.

"Oh, a governess in some nice family, I suppose," he ventured.

At that Anne threw back her head and laughed—a youthful and altogether musical sound that smote pleasantly on Jack's artistic ear.

He looked at her with a sudden new interest.

"I say, how old are you?" he asked boyishly.

"I was born just three days and three hours later than you were," she answered.

Jack was young enough and inexperienced enough to whistle, whereat Anne laughed again.

"What are you laughing at?" Jack queried.

"At the compliment your whistle paid me," she retorted.

Jack stumbled into apologies. "It's your clothes or something—it was awfully rude of me—but you know you do look older than that."

They had come to the open door then and to the welcome of firelight on silver tea-things.

"Still, it *was* a compliment," Anne said.

That night on the terrace he ventured to mention her clothes again. He felt more kinship with her since he had discovered her laugh and her age.

"Why don't you change to something more—more filmy in the evenings?" he said. "It's cheek of me to suggest it, of course, but you know, Anne, your dresses *are* dull."

She stood beside him in a high-necked silk frock that he mentally compared with the one that the housekeeper donned on Sundays.

"You bother too much about externals," she answered. "Suppose you were blind, girls' dresses wouldn't worry you, would they?"

He turned suddenly to meet her eyes gleaming in the lamp-light that was thrown from the room behind. It came to him that those eyes might be really beautiful if they glanced at one from under straight dark brows. It was rough luck on Anne that her eyebrows were nondescript.

"No, I shouldn't bother about your clothes then, because your voice is so beautiful," he said simply.

There was silence for a few moments. Jack, leaning on the parapet and smoking his cigarette, fell to conjuring up visions of his dream-girl. A new charm had been added to her now—she possessed Anne's voice.

Suddenly the girl at his side spoke again.

"I suppose this kind of life helps to make one conventional-minded," she said, almost as though she were speaking to herself.

"You're referring to me, I presume?" Jack queried.

"Yes, I suppose I was," she admitted. "There's so much space and so much time to think in here that somehow one looks for originality."

Jack threw his cigarette away. "Come and see my den," he said, as though the suggestion were a continuation of the conversation.

Anne, wandering round the book-lined den, realised that it was—a continuation and a vindication.

"So you read Pelham's 'Fairy Tales'?" she queried, coming back to Jack by the fire with the book in her hand.

He became enthusiastic at once.

"I don't just read them," he averred, "I live them."

Anne sat back in the deep armchair.

"'For,'" she quoted, "'it is wise to be foolishly happy at times, seeing that at best the sun must cause the shadows, while at worst it may bring the rainbow.'"

"Ah, that's how they want reading!" Jack exclaimed. "It's funny that you should quote from that one—it's my favourite. I say, I wonder if you'd read it all to me?"

So, in the firelight, Anne read him the modern fairy tale—a whimsical fantasy that found the oldest sorrow in the heart of the world, and set it to music so that all the young joys might dance to it.

When she had finished and closed the book, there was a long silence. . . . Jack broke it at last.

"I'm awfully glad you came," he said quite irrelevantly.

Anne smiled happily and rose. "And I'm glad you read the fairy tales," she answered.

Jack opened the door for her. "And you'll think about the frock, won't you?"

All the light went out of Anne's face.

"Does it matter so much?" she said, and left Jack wondering, as he closed the door behind her, just how much it did matter, after all.

* * * * *

It was Anne's absence—she went away for a week to attend a friend's wedding—and then the dance invitation that eventually precipitated affairs.

While Anne was away, Jack was conscious of missing her companionship. She was frequently in his thoughts—not as his

dream-girl was in them, in a series of pretty pictures, but because something incomplete in his everyday existence made him aware of her part in it.

He wrote her a boyish note of appeal that she would not lengthen her stay. He told her that Charger, his favourite mount, was ill from a cause as yet unknown, and in a postscript he wrote: "I really do miss you frightfully."

Whether it was her father's blood in her that called her to the aid of a sick animal, or whether the postscript was responsible, was never made clear, but Anne was back a day sooner than she had arranged.

She arrived once more in time for tea. Her hair was more untidy than ever, her ugly brown costume had been put on badly, and her shoes wanted cleaning; but nevertheless Jack shouted a genuine welcome to her as he came rushing down the stairs.

Lady Ferrard was mildly surprised at the warmth of his greeting, but in no way alarmed; she was quite content that he should derive pleasure from the companionship of someone so obviously safe as Anne.

Anne, with her two hands held in Jack's, glanced nervously at her hostess, but was reassured by the maternal smile.

During tea Lady Ferrard mentioned the invitation.

"Mrs. Frithingham's man brought this over," she said, handing Jack a note. "I expect it's an invitation to their dance."

Jack grew suddenly abstracted as he opened it. The Frithinghams' dance was always one of the jolliest functions the county offered. Frithingham was an old college pal, and many of the men of his year would be invited. They would bring sisters and girls—pretty girls and smart girls—girls that a fellow might be proud of.

Suddenly the dream-girl was in his mind again, vivid as she had been in the days before Anne's advent. If he could have had a girl like that to take with him. . . .

He glanced at Anne and met her eyes. He thrust the note away and, for some inexplicable reason, felt a traitor and blushed.

Anne smiled—a wise little smile that was yet wistful.

"Let's go and see Charger," she said. . . .

That night, in his den, she read another of the fairy tales to him, and afterwards in the firelight, sitting at Anne's feet, he found himself describing his ideal girl to her.

"I'd like to take a girl like that to the Frithinghams' dance," he said, "in white with pearls."

"She seems to be all clothes," Anne remarked, with something bitter in her tone.

Jack seemed unconscious of the criticism in her voice.

"I'd like her to look so stunning that all the other chaps were mad with envy," he went on.

Anne rested her hand on his head for the fraction of a second, and when she spoke her voice was no longer bitter.

"You're only a schoolboy, you know," she said.

* * * * *

On the day before the Frithinghams' dance Lady Ferrard was called to Town unexpectedly and went off by an early train. Thereupon Jack took it into his head to treat the day as a holiday, and decided that he and Anne would go for a run in the car and take a picnic lunch with them.

The rush through the air had a rather undesirable effect on Anne's hair, and she seemed to grow unhappy in her efforts to keep it tidy. Jack became aware of this at last.

"For goodness' sake, take your hat off and let your hair blow a bit," he ejaculated. "You're so taken up with fussing it about that you're as mum as a mouse. I want to hear you talk."

Something in that not-too-gracious speech seemed to please Anne, and, with a chuckle, she stuffed her hat down on the seat beside her and gave all her attention to Jack.

They behaved like school-children on a treat while they ate their lunch, though Jack was conscious of a little discord when, in some piece of child-play, he called her "Auntie."

Later Anne found a little knot of primroses, and both of them knew the sudden keen sweetness that comes with the first discovery of a spring flower.

They were quiet for a little while, and then they fell to talking of books and of the many things that make for the creation of books.

They ran back in the early twilight, and found tea waiting in the hall. They had it in the firelight, and then Anne made a tiny nosegay of primroses and tucked it in his buttonhole with hands that trembled a little.

"'Behold the lilies of the field . . .'" she said softly. "I expect you're right about my clothes, Jack."

A new emotion overwhelmed him. He caught at her hand.

"Your clothes don't matter," he said

shakily; "it's you, Anne—I can't do without you!"

She drew back. "But I'm dowdy," she said, "and plain, and you'd be ashamed to take me to a dance to meet your pals."

His clasp on her hand tightened. "Yesterday, perhaps," he said, "but not to-day, Anne. I don't want to go to the dance; I want to sit here by the fire and talk to you. . . . I'm rather raw, dear, but if you don't quite dislike me now, I believe I could make you love me one day."

Something warm and wet splashed on to his hand. "I'm so glad," said Anne's voice in a sob, "so very glad that you said that before——"

"Before what, dear?"

"Oh, before—dinner," said Anne, and suddenly, with a little laugh, she was gone.

When he stood in the drawing-room later, waiting for Anne to come down, Jack was still puzzling over what she had said. He was all eagerness to get the meal over and to have her all to himself in the den.

He thought of the dance and of how, in fancy, he had taken his dream-girl with him. . . . With only the lamp by the piano lit, it should be easy to conjure up a vision of her again, but somehow it was not easy. . . . Anne's voice was in his ears, and he was conscious only of Anne putting the primroses in his coat. He felt very humble and adoring. . . .

The door opened slowly, and Anne came across the semi-dark room and moved into the circle of lamp-light.

He caught his breath and waited. Not Anne, surely—and yet . . . Still, he did not move. . . .

For this was the dream-girl, the dream-girl and Anne inexplicably one. Her dark hair was caught back from her brow in soft natural waves. Her eyes—very much Anne's eyes—shone sweetly grey from under straight dark brows, and she was dressed in white—soft clinging white with a long rope of pearls.

"Well?" said Anne's voice, on a little caught breath.

Jack took a step forward and then paused again.

"It—it isn't the sort of frock that—that crushes easily," said Anne. . . .

Over dinner she explained it all to him.

"Your mother's note made it quite plain," she said, "that if I was anything approaching pretty I shouldn't be acceptable. But I wanted to come, so I greased my hair and did out my eyebrows, bought a few dowdy clothes, and—there I was! But, after all, only a good shampoo and a pretty frock made the difference between yesterday's me and to-day's me. I did it rather well, didn't I?"

Jack admitted that she did. "But you couldn't disguise your voice," he said. "I loved your voice, Anne."

After dinner she played for him, and suddenly, as he realised that this was his dream come true, he grew afraid that she would never come to care for him. Almost he wished that she was still plain Anne, more approachable, but none the less lovable.

He was tongue-tied for the rest of the evening, but she seemed not to notice it, and played on with a happy smile in her eyes.

When he lit her candle, he was afraid that she would notice how his hand trembled.

He held the candle up to her as she stood above him on the stairs, but for a moment she did not take it.

"Will you take me to the dance to-morrow, Jack?" she asked.

"Yes, Anne," he stammered. "And what—I mean, whom shall I say you are?"

Anne would not understand. "Say that professionally I'm known as Pat Pelham, who wrote the 'Fairy Tales.'"

He gasped at that a moment, but held to his purpose.

"Great Scot! Pat Pelham! Still, I—I didn't mean that, Anne," he said, "but it makes what I *did* mean quite impossible."

Very gently Anne took the candlestick from him and touched his fingers lightly.

"Does it?" she whispered. "Well, then, tell them—I'm a dream come true." And she bent to kiss him.

* * * * *

"The 'Fairy Tales' must have made a fortune," said Lady Ferrard, and was therewith content.

But, as has been said before, Lady Ferrard was a worldly woman.

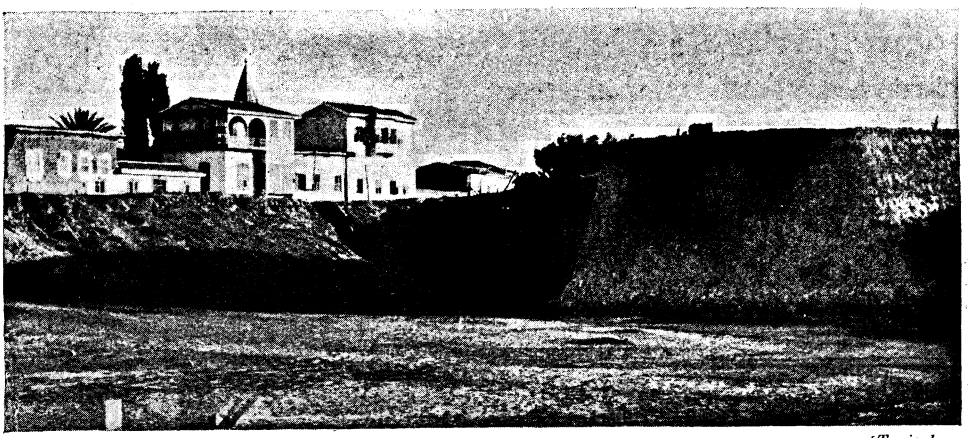


Photo by] [*Topical.*

ON THE RAMPARTS OF NICOSIA, CYPRUS.

AN ISLAND WITH A FUTURE

CYPRUS AS A BRITISH POSSESSION

By G. C. LAWRENCE

IT was in the early autumn that I first visited Cyprus, and my first impression of the island was of a rocky range of mountains, high, undoubtedly—particularly after the flat plains of Egypt which I had just left—with little sign of vegetation. That was the distant view.

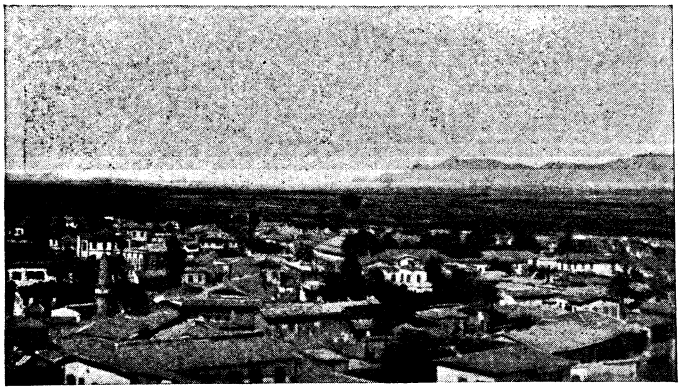
It was one of those still "blue days at sea" which are altogether outside the imagination of the stay-at-home Englishman. Conrad knew them in the Southern Seas, the wanderer knows them in many parts of the world, but to John Bull at home they are unknown and unsuspected. The sun dropped slowly from an azure sky into a saffron sea, and we lay there, waiting

> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean—

waiting for the morrow that was to herald us into the unknown island.

To most people Cyprus is but a name—a name, it may be, which calls up a few scenes of historical or Biblical lore, the visits of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to the island, or the reference to it in connection with other people in the Book of Acts—but still a name only. How many people could say off-hand where exactly it lies, or what approximately is the size of it, or how it is governed, or how even it became a British possession? Frankly, at the time I first visited it I knew none of these things.

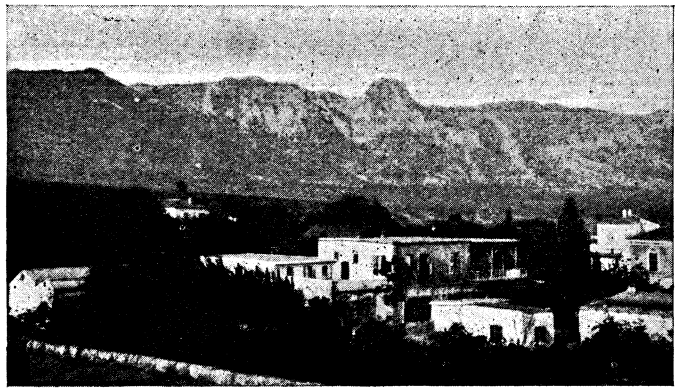
A word about these four points may not be out of place. The island of Cyprus lies in the north-east corner of the Mediterranean, some forty miles from both Asia Minor and Palestine, and within easy sight of the mountains of Lebanon on the east and the lofty Taurus Range on the north. It is a long, narrow island, which, on a map, looks not unlike a wild goose in flight with its neck outstretched. It is some hundred and twenty miles from tip to tip, and about sixty miles broad at its widest. From its earlier history the points of principal interest to English readers are its capture, in 1191, by Richard Cœur de Lion, and his marriage there to Berengaria of Navarre. Richard, however, did not hold it long. He handed it over to Guy de Lusignan, the titular King of Jerusalem, whose descendant,



NICOSIA, THE CAPITAL OF THE ISLAND: A GENERAL VIEW FROM THE MOSQUE OF ST. SOPHIA.

Catharine of Cornaro, sold it in 1487 to the Republic of Venice, from whom it was taken by the Turks in 1570. In 1878, by agreement with the then Sultan of Turkey, it was occupied by Great Britain in order to enable us to carry out our engagements to the Sultan in Asia Minor, the arrangement being that if at any time Russia restored Kars to Turkey, we in turn should retire from Cyprus. But the conditions were never fulfilled, and the island continued in British hands until Turkey took the field against us, when it was formally annexed by Great Britain. By the terms of the Peace Treaty with Turkey, signed at Sèvres last August, Cyprus is now recognised as a British possession. It is governed by a High Commissioner, representing the King, and by a Legislative Council at which both the Turkish and Greek communities have their delegates.

Day broke, and with daylight the full beauty of the island was revealed. A long stretch of sandy beach—unequalled for a gallop, as I subsequently discovered—gave place to a ridge of low-lying cultivated land dotted about with windmills. In the distance, fifteen or twenty miles away, it might be, lay the hills we had seen the previous day from the ship—huge, rugged hills resembling in outline the Cuchullins of Skye. And right in the middle of the picture lay the ancient Turkish fortress-town of Famagusta.

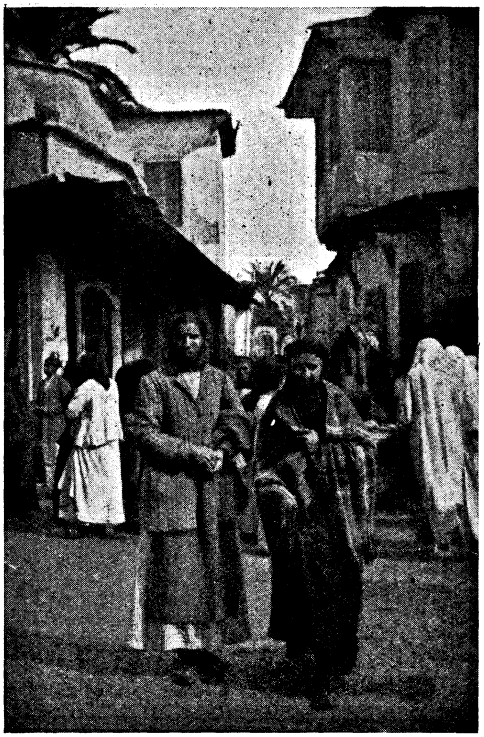


KYRENIA, WITH THE CASTLE OF ST. HILARION ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE IN THE BACKGROUND.



A FAIR AT FAMAGUSTA.

To the Westerner, unspoilt with over-much travelling in the East, few sights are finer than the first view of a picturesquely situated native town, and among native towns few I have seen come near in charm and beauty to the old-world



A STREET IN NICOSIA: GREEK WOMEN IN THE FOREGROUND.

town of Famagusta. The ramparts, built to the water's edge, give it an air of security and solidarity which, in effect, epitomise its history. In the course of many centuries it but once suffered capture at the hands of an enemy, and then it was treachery, not force, that won the day.

Famagusta is a city of churches, minarets of all shapes and sizes meeting the gaze from whatever side one looks. At one time, indeed, it was said that the town contained within its walls a church for every day of the year, though to-day but thirty remain to tell of the former glory of the town.

But I speak not as one versed in the technicalities of ancient architecture, but as a visitor recording his impressions, and much that might be lingered over must go unnoted.

Famagusta has become of recent years the chief port of the island, for it is the only one with a protected harbour. Larnaca and Limassol are bigger as towns, but they have open roadsteads only, and anything in the nature of a storm—and storms are by no means infrequent in the winter months—makes shipping there impossible.

The visitor finds himself in a veritable island of plenty, an island in which Nature gives of her best in no restricted measure,

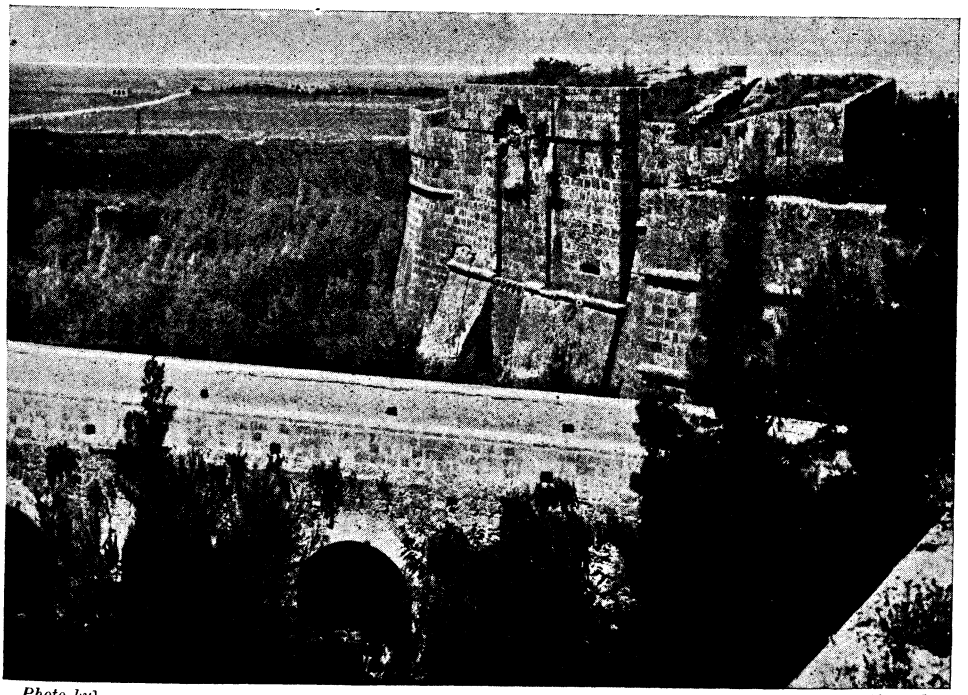


Photo by] [*Topical.*

THE OLD FORTIFICATIONS OF FAMAGUSTA.

in which man's part is limited to the gathering of her bounty. Wheat, oranges, peaches, figs, carobs, potatoes, raisins and onions, are among the chief crops, and all are produced without apparent effort. Cultivation is of the slightest. The plough is the plough which the Egyptian fellahin used in the time of the Pharaohs; the system is a fatalistic system, in which what has been from time immemorial is the rule, and in which improvements are neither wanted nor allowed. For the Cypriot, part Turkish, part Greek in origin, has all the traditional indolence of the East. He dislikes change and he dislikes movement. His idea of happiness is to lie in the shade of his house and sleep, or to sit in his *café* and drink his cup of coffee. He has no ambition and no political instinct. He has the sun in his blood, and he resents anything that disturbs his placidity.

The roads of Cyprus give a better idea than anything else of the inevitable conflict between Eastern and Western ideas, between the old and the new. In the course of a very few minutes one can see pass in succession the most primitive form of ox-cart, the camel loaded with the household goods as in the days of Noah, the gharri, the dog-cart, and the motor-car—yes, even the lordly Rolls-Royce can now be seen on the principal roads of the island.

The transport facilities of the island, however, are still of the poorest. There is a railway, it is true, but it is built on the curious principle of deliberately avoiding the towns it purports to serve, and it is of little use except for getting from Famagusta to Nicosia, the capital of the island. For all other purposes one has to hire a car or ride.

But the results of one's journeys more than compensate for the discomfort and time involved. Famagusta, Nicosia, Larnaca, Limassol, Kyrenia, Paphos—all are worth a visit. Famagusta, with its wonderful orange groves, its oleanders, its mimosas, its Salamis woods—near which St. Barnabas is buried—its stretches of sandy beach; Nicosia, with its variegated colouring, its curiosity shops, its mosques, and its race-course; Larnaca and Limassol, with their wide extent of beach and front, their prosperous merchants and rich markets; Kyrenia, with its outlook on the coast of Asia Minor, its castle of St. Hilarion perched on a crag of rock two thousand feet above the town below, its monastery at Bella Pais recalling the terraced villages of South Italy; Paphos, its mountains, its green fields, and its olive trees—these, even in the most unresponsive, cannot fail to provoke some feeling of admiration.

And Troodos! What account of Cyprus

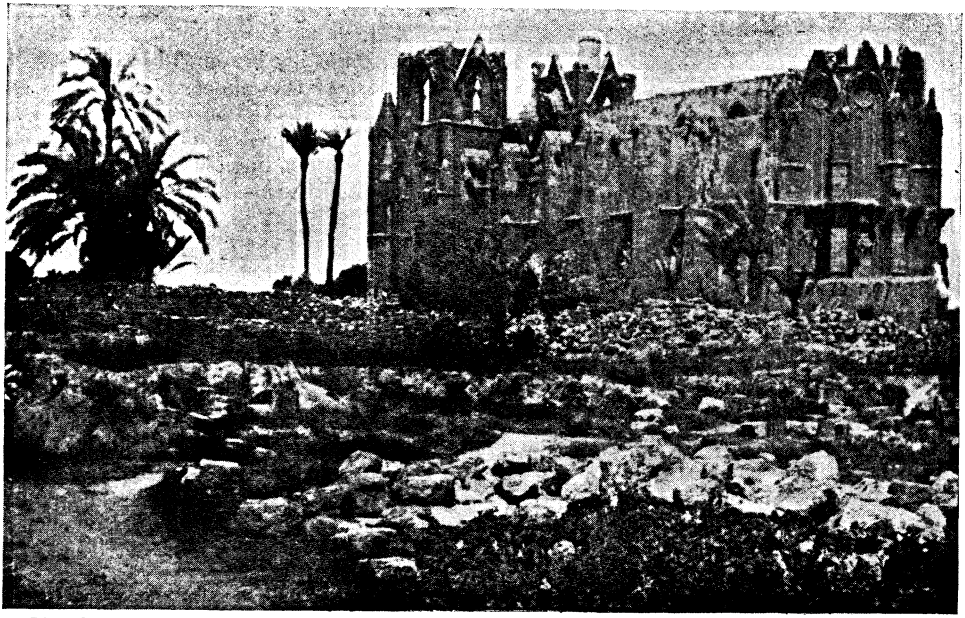


Photo by] [*Topical.*

FAMAGUSTA CATHEDRAL.

would be complete without a eulogy of its hill station ? Right on the top of Mount Olympus, six thousand feet above sea-level it lies, and from it can be seen on a clear day, stretching out in a grand panorama, the whole outline of the island's coast. Here, indeed, one gets an English, or, rather, to be more accurate, a Scottish summer at its best, such a summer as is never experienced in either England or Scotland. Clear, crisp, scented air, the fragrant smell of the pine trees, a gorgeous sun, not the sun of the plains, be it noted, but another and a kindlier sun, a sun which invigorates the body and brings joy to the heart, a sun which even at its hottest is a delight and not a trial—these are the attractions of Troodos.



THRESHING BARLEY: THE NATIVE WAY.

From June till September Troodos is the centre of all the island's activities. The seat of the Government is moved from Nicosia to the hills at the first threat of the hot season, and everyone who is anyone moves with it. Much to be pitied is the poor subordinate who has to " stick it " down below, for it can be genuinely unpleasant there in these four months.

To the official and business man of Egypt who cannot make the journey home to England every year, the hills of Cyprus are a veritable godsend. They give him just what he lacks in Egypt—air, coolness, green trees, fresh flowers, growing fruit—apples, cherries, peaches—and they give him, too, a very real sense of home. Now that the island has definitely passed into British hands, a real hill station may be expected at Troodos.

That question opens up the whole subject of the future of the island—a vital subject, which should be exercising the minds of

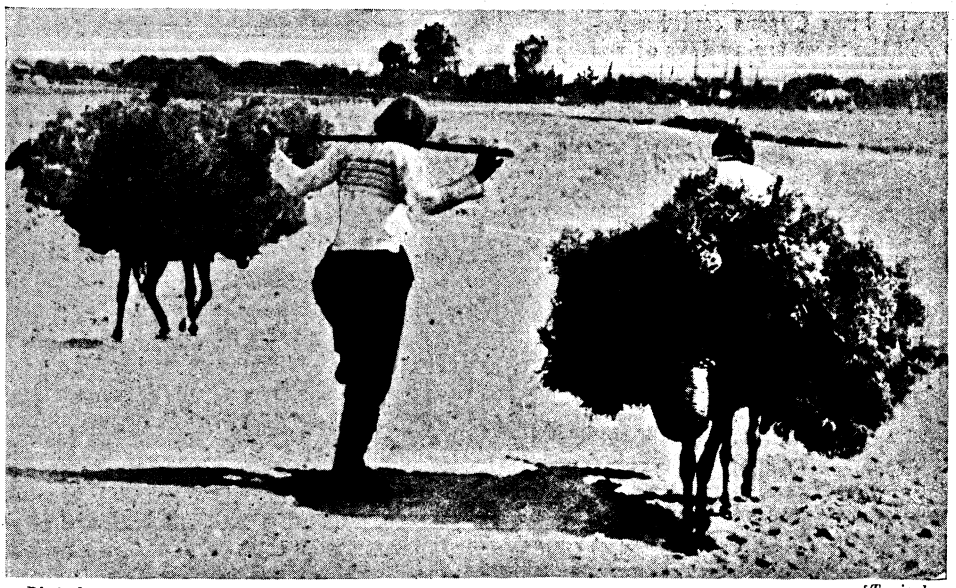


Photo by] [*Topical.*

RUSHWOOD SELLERS.

all who are interested in the development of the British Empire to-day. Here is an island, now a British possession, rich in raw materials, fertile, possessing an excellent climate, eminently suited for British cultivation, waiting only to be developed, crying out, indeed, to be developed. Is the copper from which the island was named exhausted? The ancient miners did their work in a very thorough-going manner, it is true, but have the old mines been adequately explored in the light of modern science? Perchance there yet remains sufficient ore in the island to make the production of copper a paying investment again.

Asbestos is found in large quantities, and the mines at Ameandos give employment to a thriving community, which may still further be extended. Oil, too, may yet become of importance among the island's mineral resources.

But, of course, the island is, and must remain, predominantly agricultural. Its donkeys and mules are known the whole world over. Its breed of horses is steadily being improved. Its sheep, with their fat, curly tails, are as good as any in the Near East. And the list might still be extended. Suffice it to say that both the Salonika and the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces had good cause to bless Cyprus and its fertility in the most trying days of the War. Salonika received enormous numbers of donkeys, goats, and mules—not to mention muleteers—and Egypt still more enormous quantities of firewood and potatoes, the latter an unknown luxury to the civil population at that time. Tobacco, too, is growing in importance—in fact, to prevent its cultivation from endangering the food supply of the island, steps had recently to be taken to limit the area on which it might be grown

The question then arises: What is lacking to ensure the full development of the island's resources? The answer is enterprise, energy, capital, brains. With these available, there is no doubt of its future. A great chance was missed during the War, when for three years some five thousand Turkish prisoners of war were kept in the island doing nothing. Was there nothing for them to do? Were the suggested extension of the harbour at Famagusta or the draining of the lake at Limassol, to make a new protected harbour, not worth doing? There could scarcely be a more striking criticism of the failure of our military and civilian authorities to co-operate than the fact that nothing was done. But it is no use crying over spilt milk. The question is: What are we going to do now to make up for lost time and lost opportunities? Is the Colonial Office awake to the immediacy of the problem?

Cyprus must be made a real hive of industry, a true home of enterprise, a prosperous exporting country—it must be made to take the place it deserves among the many flourishing possessions of the British Empire.



Photo by [*Topical.*

TURKISH CYPRIOTES, SONS OF TURKS SETTLED IN THE ISLAND.

HEARTS IN EXILE

I THINK the waves that break on England's shore
Are very blest.
I think the rain that falls on English ground
Finds there a rest
More welcome and more gravely kind
Than any other rain can find.



The trees that bravely spread to English air
Their trembling leaves;
The wild birds, nesting safe beneath
Broad English eaves,
Can only feel life's beauty, unaware
That England holds them in her kindly care;



But here are hearts that turn to England still
With longing deep
Her air to breathe, her cool grey skies to see,
Themselves to steep
In her old memory-haunted sounds and ways,
And to forget the grief of exiled days.

MARJORY M. REYNOLDS.



THE WINGED SCOURGE OF THE DARK

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "The Secret Trails," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

THE windless grey-violet dusk, soft as mole's fur brooded low over the bushy upland pasture. In the shallow valley below a gleam of yellow lamp-light shone steadily from the kitchen window of the little backwoods farmhouse. Faint, comfortable sounds floated up on the still air from the low-roofed barn, where the two horses, resting after a hard day's work, revelled in their generous feed of oats. There was a soft creaking, a rattle, and a splash, as the farmer's wife, a dim grey figure, drew a bucket of water from the deep well in the centre of the farmyard. From a patch of alder swamp beyond the brook which threaded the valley a bull-frog uttered his hoarsely mellow croak, repeating it several times with subtle variations, as if trying to improve the note. Twilight and the dewfall hushed the world to peace.

In the rough upland pasture, among the

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scattered stumps and patches of juniper and young fir-seedlings, some five or six brown rabbits were at play in the sheltering dusk like care-free children. They went leaping softly this way and that, passing and repassing each other in what looked almost like the set figures of a dance. At intervals one of the furry little players would stop short and thump heavily with his strong hind-paws upon the firm, close-cropped turf, producing a curious dully resonant sound. At the signal all the other players would turn about, as if on drill, and continue the game with what looked like a new figure.

In the midst of this furry merry-making, from the dark woods which overhung the back and northern side of the pasture, came a strange and ominous voice. *Whuh-whoo-oo, whuh-whoo-oo*—deep-toned, long-drawn, sonorous, and thrilling with an indescribable menace, it sounded twice across the quiet dusk.

At the first note the play of the rabbits stopped short, as if all the players had been smitten instantaneously into stone. In the next half second the majority of them darted frantically into the shelter of the nearest bushes, with a momentary flicker of white tail-fluffs as they vanished. The rest, as if too panic-stricken to move, or else fearing the revelation of movement, simply crouched flat where they were, motionless save for the wild pounding of their frightened hearts. Their shadowy fur melting perfectly into the dusk and the shadowy turf, so long as they kept still they were as invisible as their companions who had found refuge under the bushes. And still they kept, as if frozen.

It was perhaps half a minute later when a great dim form, as noiseless as the passing of a cloud-shadow, came winnowing low, on downy wings, over the bushes of the silent pasture. It seemed but a fragment of denser dusk come alive—except for its dreadful eyes. These eyes—great, round, palely-shining globes—searched the thickets and the open spaces with deadly intentness, as their owner swept hither and thither with his head stooped low, on the watch for any slightest motion or sign of life. But nothing stirred.

Then, just as the dim shape drifted over the open space where the rabbits were crouching, it opened its sickle-shaped beak and gave forth a sudden piercing cry, terrible and startling. This was too much for the overstrung nerves of the crouching rabbits. They sprang into the air as if shot, and leaped frantically for the bushes. The dim form swooped, struck, and the nearest fugitive felt himself clutched in neck and back by knife-edged talons hard as steel. He gave one short scream of terror, strangled on the instant. Then he was swept into the air, kicking spasmodically. And the dim shape bore him off into the deep of the woods, to the hollow where its fierce mate and savage nestlings had their home.

* * * * *

The great horned owl alighted with his prey on a stout, naked branch which stood out conveniently beside the spacious hole in the ancient, half-dead maple tree which formed his dwelling. He laid the limp body of the rabbit across the edge of the nest, half in the hole and half out of it, and with a curious, formal bobbing of his fiercely-tufted head he sidled up close to his mate, softly snapping his hooked beak by way of greeting, and giving utterance to a low twittering sound that seemed ridiculously unsuitable to such a ferocious countenance as his. His mate, larger than he and even more savage-looking, had herself just returned from a successful hunt, laden with a luckless duck from some back-woods farm-yard. Her two owlets, nearly half-grown, but still downy, were tearing greedily at the duck and bolting huge mouthfuls of it, feathers and all. She herself had already satisfied her appetite, having probably gulped down two or three mice and small birds, captured on the edge of twilight, before bringing home the duck to her brood. She was not so unselfish as her mate, who, blood-thirsty and insatiable marauder though he was, could boast, nevertheless, of no small domestic virtue. A model spouse and father, he seldom consulted his own needs till he was sure that his mate and his young were fed. Now, having assured himself that all were supplied, he turned again to his prey. Holding it down with both feet securely, he tore the skull apart with his sharp and powerful beak, and devoured first the head, which he considered the choicest morsel, bolting it, bones and all. In the meantime his mate, moved purely by the hunting lust, had sailed noiselessly from her perch and winnowed off between the dark and silent tree-trunks to seek for other prey.

Having swiftly and voraciously satisfied his appetite, the great owl wiped his crimsoned beak on the edge of the nest.

sat up very erect, and for a few moments watched solemnly his youngsters still tearing at the carcase of the duck. He was massively built, broad-breasted, and about two feet in length from the tip of his short, broad tail to the crown of his big, round head, with its two fierce, hornlike ear-tufts. In colour he was a mixture of soft browns, greys, and fawns above, distributed irregularly in vague bars and splashes, while below he was of a creamy buff, delicately barred with deep chocolate. The wide, circular disks of flat feathering which surrounded his eyes were cream-white, shading into fawn, and between them came down a frowning, pointed brow of darker feathers. His eyes, extraordinarily bright and cruel, were enormous, as round as full moons, of a gem-like yellow, with great staring pupils of jetty black. They were fixed in their sockets—as with all owls—so that when he wished to turn them he had to turn his whole head with them. His look was always a full-faced stare, challenging and tamelessly savage. His legs and feet were thickly and softly feathered in white, right down to those inexorable horn-coloured talons whose clutch could throttle a full-grown goose in a few seconds.

To ordinary ears, of man or beast, the silence of the forest at this hour was absolute. But to the great owl's super-sensitive ear-drums—veritable microphones they were—the darkness was filled with innumerable furtive sounds. A far-off beech-leaf, suddenly unburdening itself of a gathering load of dew, spoke loudly, though without significance, to him. He caught the infinitesimal whisper of crowded young twigs as they occasionally stretched themselves in their growth. Down in the thick earth-darkness close to the ground, perhaps fifty feet away, he detected the stealthy, padded footfalls of a prowling lynx, so light as to be scarcely audible to their owner himself. Without moving his body he turned his head in the direction of the sound and stared intently. The lynx, a brilliant tree-climber, was one of the very few wild creatures whom he feared, and he held himself in tense readiness to signal for his absent mate and do battle, if necessary, for his nest and young. But the sinister footfalls crept off in another direction, and he knew that his home—which was well concealed from the ground by a bushy growth of Indian pear and wild viburnum—had not been discovered.

A minute or two later the grim listener on his high listening-post detected a fairy rustling which was not of stretching twigs or dew-laden leaves. It came from under a fir thicket some fifty or sixty yards away, and so faint it was that other ears than his could scarce have caught it at a distance of ten paces. But he knew it at once for the scurrying of the shy little wood-mice over the floor of the dead and crisp fir-needles. On downy wings he dropped from his perch and sailed, swift and soundless as thought, straight in beneath the overhanging fir branches. His outstretched talons struck, like lightning, in two directions at once—and in one successfully. In that annihilating clutch a furry little life went out, without time for even a squeak of protest. The unerring hunter swept on without a pause, and rose to the nearest convenient limb. Settling himself there for a moment, he lifted his tiny victim in one claw—like a parrot eating a biscuit—bit off its head daintily and swallowed it with an air of appreciating a tit-bit, and then bolted the body at one careless gulp. A few seconds later he was back again upon his home perch, sitting upright as stiffly as a sentry at salute, his great eyes flaming spectrally through the dark.

And now thin pencils of pale light began to penetrate the uppermost branches of the trees, giving an ink-black edge to the shadow below. As the first slender ray reached him, the great owl opened his beak and ruffled up the feathers about his neck.

Whuh-whoo-oo, whuh-whoo-oo-oo, he called—a hollow, long-drawn cry all on one deep note, which seemed to come from several different quarters of the darkness at once. It was impossible, indeed, for any of the timid lurkers in the coverts, who listened to it with quivering hearts, to make out just where it did come from. But his far-off mate heard it, and knew. And from somewhere away beyond the other side of the pasture came the response, muffled by distance and ghostly dim—*Whuh-whoo-oo-oo-oo.* It signified to him that she was on her way back to the nest. He waited motionless perhaps half a minute, glanced at the two owlets who sat solemnly in the doorway of the nest, digesting their heavy meal, and then sailed off through the silvering tree-tops to hunt fresh victims about the pasture-lands and clearings.

As he emerged into the open country, his soundless passing, through the strange, distorting light of the low moon, was like that of a spectre, but, unlike a spectre, he



"Held thus at close quarters, he pounded madly with his wings, and tore in a frenzy at his enemy's face with his beak and his free talons."

swept along with him a twisting and writhing shadow which gave warning of his approach. Mice, rabbits, chipmunks, even the dauntless and furious weasels, slipped to cover. The field was as empty as a desert, except for one big black-and-white striped skunk, which glanced up at him unconcernedly and went on digging up a mouse-nest. Tyrant and assassin though he was, and audacious as he was murderous, and more than a match in beak and talons for several skunks at once, he had no inclination to come to close quarters with this self-assured little striped creature which carried such an armoury of choking poison under its tail. He swerved sullenly off to the edge of the woods again, and continued his flight along beneath their shadow till he reached the edge of the brook which flowed behind the farm-yard. Here he dropped upon a momentarily unwary frog which was sitting, half-submerged, at the water's edge. He carried it to a near-by stump and swallowed it whole. Then his ears caught a soft, sleepy twittering from among the branches of a straggling thorn-bush some twenty or thirty yards down-stream. A sudden ray from the moon, just rising over the hill, had awakened a sleeping song-sparrow, and he had murmured some drowsy endearments to his mate, who sat brooding her half-fledged nestlings close beside him. The next instant a monstrous shadowy form with blazing eyes had burst in upon them. Both tiny parents were clutched simultaneously and squeezed to death before they had time to realise what doom had overtaken them. They were promptly gulped down, in quick succession; and then, sitting erect and solemn close beside the nest, the grim marauder proceeded to pick the half-naked nestlings from the nest one by one, and to swallow them with deliberation. Though so small, they were the tastiest morsels he had sampled for a long time—since the nestful of partridge eggs, just beginning to hatch, which he had ravaged some weeks earlier in the season.

Up to this point, knowing that his greedy family was well supplied, the great owl had had no thought but for his own feasting. Now, however, he felt it was time to hunt for bigger game—for something substantial to carry home to the nest. He winged swiftly across to the farmstead, where the barn and house and wood-shed stood black against the low moon. No living thing was astir in the farm-yard, except a big white cat, prowling for mice along the edge of the barn. Though she was dangerous game, he swooped at her without a moment's hesitation. But the cat had seen him just in time, and, with an indignant spitting, she whisked in under the barn. He snapped his beak angrily, made a tour of the buildings, and found the window of the chicken-house. But it was closed with wire-netting. Glaring in through the wide meshes, he saw the hens all asleep on their perches, some with half-grown chickens beside them. But the vigilant red cock was awake, and, eyeing him defiantly, gave utterance to a sharp *kut-ee-ee-ee* of warning. The marauder tore savagely at the meshes with his mighty talons, but the wire was too strong for him, and in an instant the place was in an uproar of frightened squawks and cacklings. The kitchen door flew open with a bang. A stream of yellow lamp-light flooded across the shadowy yard. The farmer ran out, shouting and swearing fluently, and the would-be assassin, furious at being barred from such a luxury of slaughter, flew off to seek some less well-guarded prey.

About a quarter of a mile further down the valley lay another little backwoods farm, whose owner, when clearing the land, had had the good taste to leave several fine elms standing beside the house and barns. The valley was by this time full-flooded with moonlight, and the great owl, to avoid observation, flew low beside the willow and alder bushes which fringed the brook. Across the open meadow that divided the barns from the brook he skimmed, almost brushing the grass-tops, then rose noiselessly into the deep shadows which clung among the branches of the thick-leaved elms. And here, as his luck would have it, he found two turkey-hens roosting upon one of the topmost boughs.

The turkeys, being light sleepers, detected him at once; but all they did was to stretch out their long necks inquiringly and cry *Kwit-kwit, kwit-kwit.* They were acquainted with the harmless little mouse-hunting barn-owl, but this great bird was something they had never seen before, and they were full of curiosity. In one moment he had risen above them. In the next he had fallen upon the nearest, clutched her by the neck, and choked her foolish noise. Beating her wings convulsively, she toppled off her perch. Her captor strove to bear her up and fly off with her, but she was too heavy a burden for him, and with a mighty flapping the two came slowly to the ground.

This was not exactly what the marauder

wanted, but he was not one to lose any opportunity of destruction. He bit and tore with that deadly sickle of his beak till he had decapitated his massive prize, and, though he was by no means hungry, he broke up and swallowed most of the head, for the sake of the brains. In the meantime the other turkey, still resting on her perch, had kept on uttering her foolish *Kwit-kwit, kwit-kwit,* as if begging to know what all the excitement meant. She all too soon found out. Glancing up from his sanguinary meal, as if angered by her stupid noise, the great owl fixed her for a second or two with his glassy stare. Then he shot up through the gloom till he was a few feet above the anxious chatterer, pounced upon her vindictively, and swept her, strangled and futilely fluttering, from her perch. Her life promptly went out through her gaping beak; but she, too, proved too heavy for her destroyer's wing-power, and, despite his determined flapping, he was borne slowly to the ground. He tore off her silly head in sheer wantonness of destruction, then, wiping his beak on her still quivering body, he bounced into the air and flew away to seek other quarry, sailing close to the ground to avoid making himself conspicuous, and glaring fiercely under every bush as he passed.

It chanced that an indiscreet hen, impatient of the safe nests in the barn and fowl-house, where, in return for security, her precious eggs were always taken from her, had found a secret spot under a clump of lilacs at the back of the garden. Here she had accumulated a clutch of eggs, which she had now been happily brooding for close upon the allotted three weeks. The chicks within were stirring and just beginning to tap with tiny bills at the walls of their shell prisons. The proud mother was answering these taps with low, crooning sounds of encouragement and content.

It was those soft utterances of mother-love that betrayed her to her doom. She saw a pair of wide, dreadful eyes glaring in upon her through the leafage. With a shrill screech of defiance, she ruffled up all her feathers, threw back her head, and faced the enemy with threatening, wide-open beak. But of scant avail was all her devoted courage against such a foe as this. In a moment she was gripped by irresistible talons, jerked, valiantly battling, from her nest, strangled, and tossed aside, a heap of feebly-kicking feathers. And the slaughterer fell to gorging himself with the just-hatching eggs. Full-fed though he was, such supreme delicacies as those could not be left behind, and he managed somehow to put away the whole nestful. Then he grasped the body of the mother in his claws, hopped awkwardly out of the bushes with it, bore it somewhat heavily into the air, and headed his flight direct for the hollow tree in the woods.

He flew high now, having no care to conceal his coming, and the backwoods world of forest and scattered farms, rough, stump-strewn pastures, and raw, new clearings, with the silver coils of the slow brook brightly threading them, lay outspread sharp-edged below him in the white flood of the moonlight. The robber flew more slowly than was his wont, his limp booty being a massive-bodied Brahma of some six or seven pounds dead weight, and he himself somewhat sluggish from his over-hearty feast. But there was no need of haste; so he did not exert himself, but winnowed on through the blue-silver night, well satisfied with his list of slain.

Suddenly from far over the tree-tops came a hollow call. *Whuh-whoo, whuh-whuh, whuh-whuh*—not long-drawn, but staccato, hurried, urgent. It was his mate's voice, summoning him, crying for help. He woke instantly from his lethargy, dropped his booty, answered with one sonorous *whoo-oo-oo,* and shot homeward with the utmost speed of which his strenuous wings were capable.

During his absence that prowling lynx which had caused him apprehension an hour before had crept back, on the trail of a rabbit, to the neighbourhood of the hollow tree. She had missed the rabbit, but happening to glance upwards, with cruel eyes as round and moonlike as those of the great owl himself, she had detected the big black hole in the age-whitened trunk. Such a hole, she knew well enough, would be sure to be occupied by something—most probably by something young, and defenceless, and good to eat. She was hungry, and, moreover, she had a pair of sturdy kittens to feed at home in her own well-hidden lair. She ran nimbly up the huge gnarled trunk to investigate.

At the first rattling sound of her claws upon the bark, the mother-owl, who had been snuggling her owlets, shot forth angrily from the hole to see what creature was so bold as to invade her realm. But at the sight of the lynx—a gigantic tuft-eared cat as big as a foxhound—her wrath changed to frantic terror for her young, who were not

yet sufficiently fledged for effective flight. Though even more blood-thirsty and wastefully murderous than her mate, her courage was of the finest, and she knew no such thing as shirking where the defence of her round-eyed nestlings was concerned. With that one sharp cry for help—which her homing mate had heard—she swooped from her branch and struck the lynx heavily in the face with wing and claw.

Taken by surprise, the lynx was almost jolted from her hold. With a harsh spitting, she cowered and shielded her face between her paws, while the frantic mother raked her back savagely. Then, furious at being so handled by an adversary whom she despised, she scrambled on upwards and gained the branch beside the nest. From this vantage she struck out like lightning with her great armed paw, just as the desperate mother was swooping upon her again. Had the blow got fairly home, it would have been final; but the agile bird swerved backwards in time, and it struck her but glancingly, with its force half spent, on the breast. Her dense elastic armour of feathers saved her, but a shower of feathers flew, and she was hurled half-way to the ground before she could recover herself from the shock.

Imagining that her adversary was disposed of, the lynx thrust her head into the hole. The hardy owlets bit and clawed her face valiantly, but she snatched one in her jaws, crunched its neck, and plucked it forth upon the branch. Holding it comfortably between her huge fore-paws, she lay flat along the branch and proceeded to devour it. As she did so, the desperate mother, shaken but undaunted, returned to the attack and struck her again in the face with rending talons.

Holding her prey firmly with one paw, the lynx, with an ear-splitting yowl of pain and rage, lashed out again at her resolute assailant, but missed her aim completely. And at this juncture the male bird arrived.

In silence he shot downward and struck at the great grey beast. The latter had caught sight of him as he swooped. She let go of the dead owlet—which dropped to the ground—and rose slightly on her hind-quarters in order to meet this new attack with the full armoury of her fore-claws. By a fortunate stroke she caught him by one wing, and the next moment her long fangs were buried in his thigh. Held thus at close quarters, he pounded madly with his wings, and tore in a frenzy at his enemy's face with his beak and his free talons. He was pulled down, however, and borne backwards, for all his indomitable struggles, and, getting her claws set into one wing near the shoulder, the lynx fairly tore it from its socket. But undaunted even in that hopeless strait, he went on fighting to the death.

The mother-owl, meanwhile, had been tearing and clawing like a maniac at the lynx's neck from above. Unable any longer to endure this torment, the latter tried to double back upon the narrow branch and defend herself. The male bird heaved up valiantly beneath, and with a last effort fixed his beak into the side of her throat. She lost her balance, and the two toppled off into space together. Over and over they turned, close locked, and then fell apart. The owl, all but dead and with one wing hanging useless from its tendons, continued to roll over in his descent, and landed with a thud which finished him. The lynx, on the other hand, turning herself right side up and spreading all four legs apart so as to make a sort of parachute of herself, landed lightly on the powerful elastic springs of her paws. The mother-owl had been on top of her all the way down, and was still frantically tearing at her back. But the lynx had had enough. With a screech of panic, she darted under some low branches, scraping off her assailant, and sped away, belly to earth, like a terrified cat, through the densest thickets she could find.

The victorious mother-owl did not follow. She circled twice, very slowly, above the sprawled bodies of her mate and her nestling, staring down upon them with wide, unwinking, expressionless eyes. Then she winnowed soundlessly up to her perch, and hurried into the nest to see if her other fledgling had escaped unharmed.

LAWSON'S LISBETH

By HAROLD BINDLOSS

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

SHORTLY before the wakes holiday Lisbeth went to the steelworks with Lawson's supper. Not long since one of her numerous duties was to carry her father hot food, but Lawson declared the lass was getting too pretty to walk about the mill, and Lisbeth agreed. Duty had not much charm for her, and she would sooner go to a picture palace with a young man. For all that, at times when she wanted something, she cooked a supper Lawson liked and started for the mill. Lisbeth knew men. Although she was rather practical than romantic, she had something of Carmen's talent.

While he ate his supper Lawson pondered. His wife was dead, and sometimes he doubted if he looked after Lisbeth properly. The lass went about too much — to dances, cinemas, and millhands' picnics. Since Lawson's pay was not large, he wondered how she did it; but his house was well kept, and, so far as he knew, he owed nothing at the shops. Recently Lisbeth had now and then come back to the mill, and Lawson, imagining he saw her object, on the whole approved. Stephen Brice was a steady lad, and the lass might do worse than take up with him. All the same, Lawson doubted. Lisbeth's lovers were numerous, and Stephen was not smart.

Lisbeth stood where the white glow from a soaking-furnace touched her face. Her talents were not cultivated, but her skin was white and pink, and she knew the dark iron columns made a good background. Moreover, she was in view of the furnace men, contemplatively munching bread and cheese.

"Is the pasty nice?" she asked by and by.

"I've had worse," Lawson replied. "At a pinch, I might mannish t'other."

"One's enough," said Lisbeth, smiling. "The other's not for you."

She went off, and Lawson thoughtfully watched her cross the iron floor. The lass was pretty—although she made the things herself, her clothes were good—and she *had a way*. When she passed the resting groups, young men turned their heads. Lawson had begun to feel a lass like that was something of a responsibility. Well, Stephen Brice was a good lad. If Lisbeth wanted him, she would get him, and good luck to her.

At the plate mill Lisbeth stopped and fixed her eyes on a picture that had some dramatic interest. The ponderous rolls were not turning, and all was quiet but for the hiss of steam and the rumble from the vague high towers of the blast furnaces. Gas-jets, slanted in the wind that swept the open sheds, threw flickering lights on standing machinery and picked out the figures of resting men. In the foreground, where the light was good, three who were not resting stood beside a big steel plate.

Two wore ordinary clothes, and Lisbeth knew the first was Ackroyd, the works manager. His hands were in his pockets, and he frowned. The other, talking angrily, was a steel inspector. Firth, the old plate-roller, fronted Ackroyd. His clothes were stained by engine grease, his mouth was tight, and his face was very red. Lisbeth was intrigued, but she could not hear their talk, and presently went on to the roll train. Brice leaned against a coupling, and, since he was the roller's leading hand, knew what was going on; but at first Lisbeth did not ask.

"I baked some pasties for father, and thought I'd bring one for you," she said.

"You're very kind, my lass," said Stephen, and wiped the sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

"I wish you wouldn't do that!" Lisbeth remarked.

Stephen grinned and pulled a large red handkerchief from his trousers pocket. His trousers were the kind called moleskin, and he wore no other clothes except a belt and sooty shirt. He was a handsome fellow, and looked very big and muscular, but his mouth was weak.

"Thoo knows I'd do nothing thoo wadent like," he said.

Lisbeth frowned at her lover's joke. He knew she did not like her native dialect, which she did not use; nor, as a rule, did Stephen. North Country working-folk, are so to speak, bi-lingual. Sometimes their English is Elizabethan, and sometimes that approved by the Board of Education.

"Wakes week is soon," she resumed. "Are you going to the foundrymen's picnic? Tom Jevons wants to take me in his side-car, but I don't know. The basket shakes you, and you get all the dust."

"Come with me," said Stephen, who knew Lisbeth and used an argument he thought would carry weight. "I'll get Smith's two-seater, and we'll cut the others out."

Lisbeth pondered. In the North a picnic is not a meal in the open air, but an organised function, at which one wears one's best clothes, listens to band competitions, and watches athletic sports. Lisbeth knew if she did not go with Stephen, she might be forced to go in a crowded wagonette. Tom Jevons had not urged her much.

"I'll think about it," she replied. "Why were they arguing about the plate just now? Mr. Ackroyd looked angry and Firth very glum."

"Inspector's particular. Reckons he can't pass the plate. It's extra long and hard, and cost a lot to make. Last week Firth turned out another that went to scrap-heap."

Lisbeth nodded. As a rule, a steel-roller engages his helpers, and is paid by the weight of approved material. Spoiled stuff is not paid for, because the works lose much.

"But Firth's a good roller?"

"Near the best. All the same, he's getting old, and when Savile was manager we rolled the plates different. Now Ackroyd's come, we've got to do it his way."

"I see," said Lisbeth, whose brain worked fast. "Could *you* roll the plates on the new plan?"

"I might, but I'm not likely to get t' chance just yet. Don't know if I want it soon. Old Firth's a good sort, and a head roller's job is bothersome."

Lisbeth knitted her brows. Stephen's staunchness did not move her; she thought him too easily satisfied.

"But what about picnic?" he resumed.

"Oh, well," she said, "I'll let you know. Perhaps, if you're very nice——"

She gave him a smile and went off, but when she got home she sat by the fire and mused. To begin with, she saw in the little drama in front of the rolls the natural clash of antagonistic human qualities. One had an old and obstinate servant of the company's, who worked by instinct and long-established rules. Then one had a new and rather young manager, jealous for his authority, introducing modern methods that might make the other's inherited skill of less account. The clash was inevitable.

Then Lisbeth pondered about Stephen. He was dull and not ambitious, but he knew his job, and, since she thought Ackroyd approved him, he might be pushed on. Besides, he was big, and Lisbeth, who was short and light, liked big men. Then a man she had slighted talked about her one day in the mill, and Stephen knocked the fellow out. Lisbeth heard about this, and it counted for something. On the whole, she liked Stephen rather better than her other lovers, and perhaps, if he could be persuaded—— She resolved she would go to the picnic.

On an afternoon of the wakes week she and Stephen sat in the heather on the hill-side behind Bowscale Wood. Below them, in a green hollow, a crowd pressed about a ring where two wrestlers swayed. Shouts and laughter pierced the music of the band. The afternoon was hot, the sea shone like silver, and in the background broken hills cut the sky. Ten miles off, thick grey smoke-clouds rolled along the shore. For a week the roll trains would not turn, but when trade is good, the blast furnaces never stop.

The landscape had no charm for Lisbeth; the beauty she thought about was hers and two or three other girls'. Stephen was satisfied with her and his pipe, and Lisbeth was pretty enough to please a fastidious eye. Small, slender, and graceful, sometimes imperious and sometimes appealing, Lisbeth knew her power. Now she meant to use her power. Her business was to force a rather dull but, on the whole, honest fellow to do what he ought not.

"I keep thinking about Firth and Mr. Ackroyd," she remarked.

"Let's forget the works," said Stephen. "I'd sooner think about the little new houses with the plaster fronts we ran past where the tramline stops. Nice bay-window parlour and a bit o' garden! One could keep hens——"

Lisbeth laughed scornfully. She did not see herself occupying a house like that. She had long cooked, and washed, and mended Lawson's clothes. In fact, she had had enough.

"Poky little huts!" she said.

"As big as the house you live in."

"Exactly," said Lisbeth. "That's the trouble! When I start housekeeping, I want something better. Then you might manage the rent and taxes; but what about the furnishing?"

"I'm saving a bit. Mayhappen it won't be very long——" Stephen replied, and stopped because he saw a brilliant light. "Some day," he resumed, "I'll get roller's job, and you can, in reason, have the house you like."

"*When* will you get the job?"

Stephen looked thoughtful. "Well, it might be some years. Firth's still going strong, and I'm not in a hurry to put him out. Taught me my business; he's a good old sort."

"*Some years?*" said Lisbeth, lifting her brows. "You're dull, Stephen. Do you think the other fellows are as slow as you? Tom Jevons, Rawnsley, and Abe Railton want me now. You see, I haven't promised to marry you yet."

Lisbeth's statement was accurate. In fact, Stephen had not asked her outright to marry him. In the North a girl takes some things for granted. All the same, he saw he ran some risk, and the blood came to his skin.

"Besides," she resumed, "Firth isn't going strong; he's spoiling some steel."

"That's because of Ackroyd's new way of rolling and his patent fixings. You pass the plates through quicker, at a different heat," said Stephen. He got technical, and Lisbeth stopped him.

"Ackroyd doesn't like Firth. He knows, if there's trouble at the rolls, the directors may think his patent won't work."

"Mayhappen Firth is a bit obstinate. T'other night we were rolling a thick plate, and Tom was passing her slow. I was at the screws, and pulled bars round a bit, without his knowing. Plate came out just right."

"Suppose you'd turned the screw the other way?" said Lisbeth meaningly.

"Then we'd have spoiled some expensive stuff, and Firth might have lost his job."

"He's bound to lose his job," said Lisbeth, and gave Stephen a strangely seductive look. "When he does lose it, Mr. Ackroyd will give it you."

Stephen started, and his face got hot, for he began to see where she led.

"I'm not as shabby as aw that! Cheating a man who trusts you!"

"An obstinate old fool," said Lisbeth, getting a little nearer and putting her hand on his arm.

He pushed her back, but his mouth was loose and irresolute. Lisbeth's eyes sparkled. She had not been repulsed like that before, and resolved that Stephen should pay. In the meantime, however, he must be led where she meant him to go. Afterwards, if he was properly urged, he might go some distance. Stephen was dull, but he knew his job.

"I'm sick of keeping father's house and working all day long," she said. "Tom Jevons wants me, but I don't know——" She paused and turned her head. "I'd sooner marry you."

Stephen took her in his arms, and hers went round his neck. He felt her heart beat, his beat fast, and his scruples began to melt.

"My boy!" she said, and began to talk in a low voice. Stephen's scruples melted altogether.

When they went down the hill, he was quiet. The sun was low, the shadow of the wood was dark on the grass, and Stephen felt he had lost something that was worth much. He thought he had won Lisbeth, but victory is sometimes expensive, and when the works restarted he must pay. Although Lisbeth was gentle and charming, he knew her resolute.

As a rule, when the rolls begin to turn after a holiday, things do not go well. Engines that have stopped for cleaning run hot, and the relations between leaders and helpers are not always harmonious. Moreover, the night was stormy, and a boisterous wind blew iron-scale and dust about the mill. Gas-jets wavered, and the light was puzzling. A bearing got hot, a coupling broke, and Firth was sour and moody. They were rolling boiler plates of unusual size and strength for a famous shipbuilding house. Stephen was highly strung. He shrank from the thing he meant to do, but knew it must be done soon. In fact, if he thought about it much, his resolution would vanish.

The lights flared and sank. Giant rolls rattled, and the hollow rumble of the big blowing engines at the blast furnaces echoed about the sheds. One smelt burning tallow and rank olive oil. By and by a white-hot block was brought from the soaking-furnace and thrust against the rolls. The revolving cylinders drew in the lump, which blazed and threw up showers of sparks. Shot out, with fading splendour, on the other side of the train, the mass went

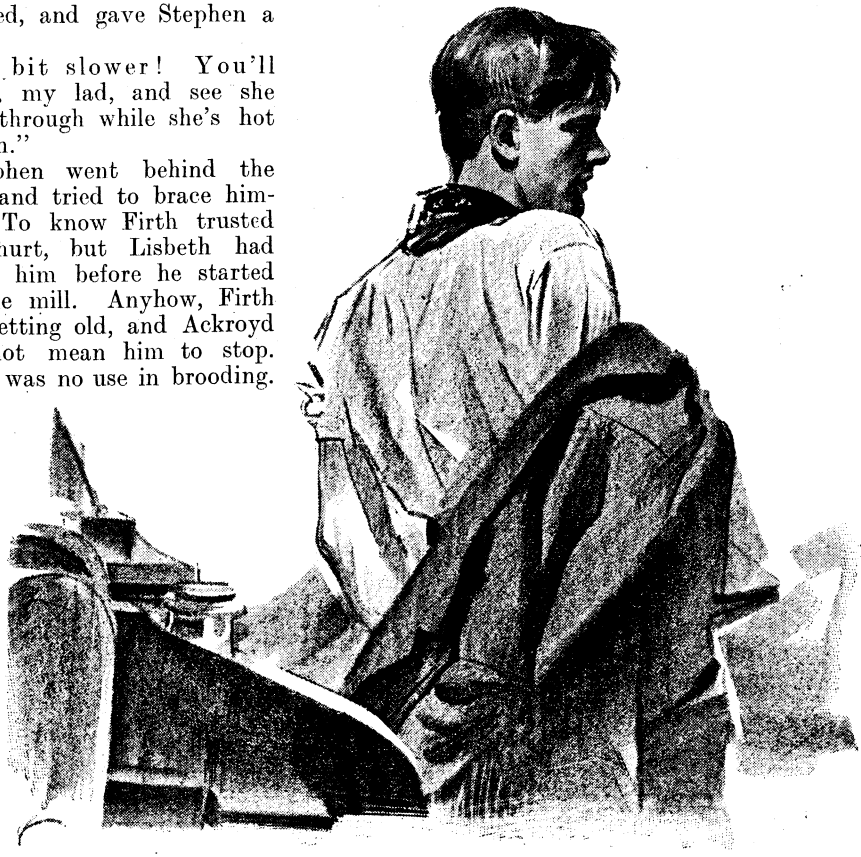
backwards and forwards between the rolls. It got larger and thinner, and its colour changed from dazzling white to red. Couplings and reverse gear clashed; the rolls, shocking and groaning, kneaded the plastic metal. It was now a plate, and its enlargement must finish before the outside cooled. At length the rolls threw it out, the men wiped their wet faces, and Firth bent down with his callipers.

"Inspector'll not find much fault with that," he said, and signed to Stephen. "Aw t' same, bring lamp to the screws."

Stephen took the lamp, and his hand shook. His pluck was going, but what he meant to do must be done when the next plate went through the rolls. Moreover, all the gang could see Firth adjust the screws. The roller was soon satisfied, and gave Stephen a nod.

"A bit slower! You'll watch, my lad, and see she gans through while she's hot enough."

Stephen went behind the train and tried to brace himself. To know Firth trusted him hurt, but Lisbeth had kissed him before he started for the mill. Anyhow, Firth was getting old, and Ackroyd did not mean him to stop. There was no use in brooding.



"'Put on your coat and git oot, Steve Brice.

If Stephen wanted Lisbeth, he must get his employer's job.

A truck brought a shining bloom from the furnace; the rolls crashed, and flame and sparks leaped up. Stephen watched, shading his eyes from the brightness while he helped a man with the great hanging pincers. He imagined Firth did not note the bloom was not squeezing out as fast as it ought. It came back, went forward again, and then, by contrast, all was dark. The darkness got suddenly deeper, and Stephen saw his luck was good, for a savage gust of wind had blown out the gas near the controls.

He jumped into the gloom and was back before the plate reappeared and its dulling radiance pierced the gloom. It looked as if nobody had seen him go, but the plate was thicker than the roller knew, and was losing the heat that kept it plastic. There was a harsh note in the rumble of the train.

The rolls jarred, Firth ran forward, and when he tried to put his callipers on the cooling metal, his face got very grim. The train would not pull the plate through, and Stephen thought it too late to slacken the

screws. The steel was getting hard; they must stop.

Ackroyd heard the mill stop, and when Stephen looked round, he and another stood beside the plate. The other was Savile, who had long been manager and now occupied a seat on the board. Firth stood

Then Stephen began to understand all that he had done. He had robbed his master of more than his post. Firth's pride and trust in his inherited skill were gone. He was down and out, and now he fronted dismissal he looked old and broken. But Stephen had hesitated much and



When you come for your money, we'll have a talk.'"

opposite, and his tense look indicated that he knew the company would give his post to a younger man. All the same, one could see he was puzzled. Ackroyd's face was red, old Savile knitted his brows.

was unstable. Moreover, Lisbeth was not beside him to steady his nerve. He was afraid, ashamed, and repentant. After a few moments' struggle, he advanced recklessly.

"If plate's a waster, it's not roller's fault," he said.

Savile's look was inscrutable, Ackroyd's savage.

"The plate is a waster. The roller runs the mill," the manager rejoined, and turned to Savile. "Old-fashioned obstinacy and distrust of new plans! He has spoiled other stuff, and you know what these big plates cost——"

"It wasn't like that," Firth interrupted. "I was rolling her *your way*, Mr. Ackroyd."

"He was," said Stephen. "After he'd set the mill as he wanted, I altered screws."

"You mean, without his knowing?" Ackroyd remarked.

"Yes. He wouldn't could see me. Gas blew out."

Savile gave Stephen a thoughtful glance that disturbed him worse than the manager's savage frown.

"Then we have no more use for you. If you imagine you know better than the man who runs the mill, try to find somebody who'll give you a roller's job," said Ackroyd, and turned to Firth: "Get rid of the fellow."

"I'se get rid of him aw right," Firth replied very grimly. "Put on your coat and git oot, Steve Brice. When you come for your money, we'll have a talk."

Stephen got his coat and started for the gate, but Savile went after him and at a quiet spot touched his arm.

"If you're wise, you'll not wait for pay day, my lad," he said. "You had better go to-night, *before the men find out.* Ackroyd doesn't understand yet; Firth does."

Stephen thought the counsel good. There was no use in seeing Lisbeth. Although she was sometimes kind, she was sometimes very hard. In an hour a train started for Sheffield, where he might get a job. He went, and did get a job, for which the pay was small, and not long afterwards an ornamental wedding card arrived. The card was Lisbeth's intimation that she had done with him. On the whole, Stephen found resignation easier than he had thought. When Lisbeth was about, one owned her charm; but when she was not, one pondered. In fact, Stephen began to be sorry for Tom Jevons. Lisbeth might take her husband far, but her pace was fast, and Tom must keep up. If he got behind, Lisbeth would use the whip. Stephen resolved, if he married, he would marry a girl satisfied to go steadily along the straight, beaten path.

A COTTAGE IN WONDERLAND

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD COPPING

SHE had reached that age when a little girl begins to lose her first illusions. I do not mean that she realised the emptiness of life, the selfishness of love, or any of the harsh truths that come to vex us in our middle age. She was only seven or eight years old, a frail, solemn, day-dreaming child who was growing up in keeping with her baptismal name of Ruth. A short month ago she had discovered the difference between a real and an honorary uncle—a blood relation and a family friend. This had been something short of a tragedy; but to-day she had learned on good authority that, after all, she had been told and made to believe there were no such things as fairies.

It was growing dark in the wood. Overhead, between the fluttering leaves, there was no glow of sunlight in the pale blue sky. Only from low down in the west came gleams of golden red, stealing between the trunks of the old trees. The clamour around a far-off rookery, blended by distance into a low, faint murmur, was the only sound.

She lay on the young bracken where she had sobbed out all her tears. Her friends were worse than dead—they had never existed. She had called to them, but they had not come. Only the wind had rustled in the dry bracken. The world was barren, empty, desolate. Surely, if there were fairies, after all, they must have answered those long, broken cries.

It was past her usual bed-time, and she knew that her parents and nurse must be searching for her. She would be badly scolded when they found her, but she did not care. Nothing that could happen to her mattered in the least. They had no being, those little people who had been so real to her.

Night was falling fast in thin veils of darkness over the wood, but she had no room in her heart for fear. Lying with her eyes close to the soft bracken, she hardly knew how quickly the light was failing.

It was a snappy nurse who had dealt the blow just after tea. Ruth had begged repeatedly to be read to out of a book of fairy tales, and nurse was not in the mood, having a troublesome love affair upon her mind. At last came the dreadful words:

"Oh, don't keep bothering me, Miss Ruth! There aren't no such things as fairies. A great big girl like you ought to know that."

With a faith already shaken, she had rushed to her mother, longing to be assured that nurse had told a wicked story. But mother was angry with cook, and much worried with the problem presented by cooks in general. So Ruth heard nurse's dreadful words confirmed.

It was just such a wood as Hop-o'-my-Thumb may have passed through with his brothers, scattering bread to leave a trail. The old witch—a terrifying, but not the less delightful, body—might well have set up her house of sweetmeat there to be a lure to wandering children. Titania might well have had her bower and kept court amongst the tall bracken. A few short hours ago these things had been so easy to believe.

That heavy tiredness, common to children after the stress of grief, lay upon Ruth, so that she almost dozed there in her sorrow. The rustling of the leaves overhead sounded a long way off, and, as her ears grew used to it, became merged in the stillness. But presently the sound of human voices fell upon her ears and caused her to press closer to the ground.

It was not her parents or any of the servants who were approaching; her quick hearing told her that immediately. But she had an instinctive fear of strange people, and at the sound of their approach fear

came back to her. Her nurse had told her terrifying stories of little girls stolen by gipsies. She lay quiet and still in the bracken as a startled rabbit hides in a tangle of brushwood.

II.

THE man and woman came slowly down the narrow path hand in hand and swinging their arms like children. They were both young—both, to be exact, two years on different sides of thirty. The man, who was the elder, was tall, slim, and bronzed, with neutral-tinted hair and moustache and a pair of kindly grey eyes. The woman was small, fragile, delicate-looking and pretty, childish in face and form, dark-haired and dark-eyed. She had to walk briskly to keep pace with the slow, short steps of her husband.

"Aren't you tired, dear?" he asked her presently. "Shall we go back?"

"No, not yet. I'm not a scrap tired, really. I want to be nice and sleepy when we get in." She turned to him with a pressure of the fingers and an upward glance. "I'm so happy, Lionel."

"Are you, dear?" He picked her up by the waist as easily as he might have lifted a feather, kissed her, and set her down again. "Now," said he, "I wonder if Puck, Titania, Oberon, or any of those small people who may be watching can guess that we've been married five years? Let's get back, dear, and I'll play you to sleep on the old fiddle. Two walks a day is as much as you ought to have."

"Very well." She was on the point of turning, and suddenly caught her breath. "Lionel! Look! What's that?"

He looked in the direction in which she was gazing, peering into the bracken.

"Yes," he said, laughing, "there's something white there, certainly. Why, bless my soul, if it isn't a kiddie!"

He strode forward and lifted up the child, who remained still and quiet until she felt his hands upon her. Then she writhed and began to cry aloud. He tried to soothe her in a clumsy, masculine way, turning suddenly to murmur: "Lois, come here."

Lois was already at his side, and, bending over Ruth, spoke to her as only a woman can speak to children. Presently the cries died down to breathless sobs.

"What's the matter, dear?" Lois asked. "Are you lost?"

The child remained dumb. Perhaps she reasoned in her small mind that it were better to let these strangers imagine that she was lost than to tell them the true state of affairs. Otherwise they might laugh at her, likely enough.

Lois glanced up at her husband.

"We must take her with us," she said.

"Of course. I intend to carry her. Up you come, young woman, and we'll find mother in less than no time."

He hoisted Ruth on to his shoulder and glanced sideways and upwards at her to see if she were smiling.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "may we have the honour of inquiring where you live?"

Ruth knew very well, but she said nothing, for the reason that she found it too difficult to explain. At that very moment she was on her father's land. These were the first people she had ever met who had not known who she was.

"That settles it," said Lionel, after a pause. "For a short while at least you will have to put up with our humble domicile. Ready, Lois? Right-ho."

He turned about, and they began to make their way slowly back along the way they had come, Ruth perched high on the man's shoulder and vaguely wondering what now was to happen to her. As they walked, Lois kept smiling up at the child and trying to attract her gaze.

"Catch hold of me as tightly as you like, Miss Snooks," Lionel said, "and, if you happen to see any fairies, just you point them out to us."

It was the most unfortunate of remarks, and Ruth once more began to cry.

"There aren't any fairies!" she gasped. "There aren't any fairies!"

Lionel looked sideways at his wife.

"We have stumbled across a little Sadducee," he said. "No, don't cry like that, my dear. Who told you that there weren't any fairies?"

"M-mother and nurse."

"Then mother and nurse ought—— Excuse me. But you know better than that, don't you?"

He spoke so gravely that the child held her breath in a moment of hope. Then she went on sobbing.

"M-mother and nurse used to tell me there was such things as fairies, and now to-day they say there isn't. And—and I went out and tried to find them. I asked them to come, so as I could see them. But they—they wouldn't, because there aren't any."

The husband and wife exchanged glances. The woman lifted a caressing hand to Ruth's cheek.

"Dear," she said, "you will have to take the fairies on trust. They are whimsy creatures, and never there when we most want them. But there *are* fairies, all the same."

didn't quite mean what she said. But there *are* fairies, all the same."

Ruth went on sniffing, still in disbelief. To her it seemed just then that all grown-up



"'There aren't any fairies!' she gasped."

"You don't believe in them," Ruth said, sniffing.

"But I assure you we do. Don't we, Lionel? Perhaps mother was angry, and people were liars, and that they had entered into a conspiracy to make fools of little girls.

"No, there aren't," she said miserably. "They're all pretend."

The man laughed up at her.

"We happen to be friends of theirs," he said. "In fact, we're received at Titania's court. Eh, Lois? A little girl who doesn't believe in fairies is worse than a whole town full of atheists. We'll talk to you about them when we get indoors."

They came in time to a cottage on the edge of the wood, and Lionel held on to Ruth with one hand while he fumbled for a key in his pocket with the other. It was Ruth who broke a long silence.

"Mr. Wenslow lives here," she volunteered.

"Ah, so you know him, do you? But he doesn't live here now. He's let it to us for six months, which means to say that we're taking care of it for him."

"It belongs to father," said Ruth. "All the cottages around here belong to father."

The husband and wife exchanged glances.

"Then," said Lionel, "you live at the Manor, Miss Snooks, and your name is not really Miss Snooks, but Miss Hapcott."

The little girl let drop her head wearily.

"Yes, I'm Ruth Hapcott, and—and I'm very tired."

"You can rest, dear, now," said Lois. To her husband she added in a low voice: "We had better send Mary up to the Manor at once. They must be very anxious. I suppose they'll send a carriage down for her."

Inside, the cottage was prettily furnished in a comfortable and unpretentious way. In the long, low-ceilinged front room, whither she was led, a large settee seemed to open its arms to the tired little girl. With a sigh she sank into the embrace of its soft cushions and snuggled down.

"If there were only fairies!" she murmured faintly.

Lionel went to the sideboard and poured out a glass of lemonade, which he handed to the child.

"Miss Snooks," said he, "drink this to the health of all the small people in Fairyland. You are young and should be wise. Don't be foolish like your elders. The fairies are strange people. They leave us so quickly and sometimes for so little cause."

"You don't really believe in them," Ruth said dreamily.

"But I assure you I do," he answered.

Lois sat beside the child and put an arm around her.

"Dear," she said, "the fairies live in Wonderland, and so long as we live in Wonderland they are with us always. We nearly lost them once. Tell her, Lionel."

"She wouldn't understand," the man answered. "Shall I play on the fiddle?"

"Yes, but tell her first. Children know more than you think, and if she doesn't quite grasp your meaning now, she may remember what you say in the after years, when her time of trial is at hand."

The man hesitated a moment.

"Miss Snooks," he said, resting a hand upon the high mantelshelf, "my wife and I once stood on the borders of Wonderland. We were so near to passing outside, and then we should have lost the fairies for ever. But they are with us now—always in the woods and sometimes in the house on quiet nights."

"Is this make-believe?" Ruth asked, her tired eyes kindling.

"No, it's the solemn truth. Lois and I were always in love with each other, but it seemed so hard to marry. She is very delicate, and would have died if she had lived long in the big town where my business was. And it seemed impossible for me to give up my work, for I had so little money besides what I earned. Somebody else—a rich man—wanted to marry Lois. Oh, I assure you, the fairies were very anxious for us. You see, they are very angry if two people in love do not marry and live happy ever after.

"One night we had to decide. It was in a little summer-house, covered all over with wistaria, in Lois's garden. It was a dreadful hour for both of us, Miss Snooks, and the fairies were ringed about us outside, watching and whispering and shaking their heads. You see, we were used to having plenty of money, and if we married I should have to give up my business, and we should have to go and live in the country and be very poor. We both thought that we couldn't be happy without plenty of money, and we knew that we couldn't be happy without each other. But the fairies decided for us in the end. I thought I heard them laughing when it was all over. Didn't you, Lois?"

Whilst speaking, he stole to a corner of the room, took a fiddle out of its case, and began absently to tune it.

"Miss Snooks," he continued, "we have been married a long time now, and we are very poor, but we have never been so happy. And—I ask you, as a reasonable young woman, who makes us happy if it isn't the fairies?"

The child said nothing, but looked from one to the other with sleepy, wondering eyes.

"One of these days," the man went on, "when you're grown up, you may have to decide whether or not to stay with the fairies in this Wonderland of theirs. And then you may have a dim memory of childhood—two stupid people in a little cottage, a pretty lady with her arm about you, a big ugly man hugging a fiddle and talking to you in a dim light. And it may happen that you will remember what I am trying to tell you—that the fairies are very real people, and that without them there is no true happiness. Happiness does not consist of large houses, servants, nice things to eat. And now—God forgive me for talking priggishness—I am going to play you a fairy dance."

He tucked the fiddle under his chin and made a rapid sweep with the bow. In a moment the child's eyes were closed and opened to a happy vision of little people dancing in and out between buttercups and daisies in rich meadow grasses. It seemed to her that no fiddle was playing, but that happy children were laughing in the distance, birds singing, streams flowing merrily in sunshine, golden lads and lassies kissing under boughs laden with hawthorn blossom.

Lionel went on with his music, almost forgetting the child. His eyes were on his wife, and her gaze met and held his in the soft light. And now he played to her, and to her only, a tune that told of the eternal youth of the world.

Presently, when his hands dropped, and the music died away, leaving only a faint ringing in the room, he went over to her and kissed her, and then the sleeping child.

* * * * *

Ruth did not wake until a grinding of carriage wheels sounded on the road outside. Then she opened her eyes and looked wonderingly into the face of Lois bending over her.

"Why," she murmured, still half in her dream, "I believe *you're* a fairy."

"Now, that," said Lionel, "is just what I think myself."

THE LITTLE PIPER.

ACROSS the world and farther yet
Alone he pipes whom all forget,
A simple strain and only one;
Yet suns shall fail ere it be done,
And all the stars in ruin set.

And though in wastes with briars beset
His little pipe such blooms beget
As mark the ways Spring travels on
Across the world;

Though at its sound the violet
In April woodlands dewy-wet
Glow like the rose of Babylon;
Witless he wonders how such tone
Can sound through all our surge and fret
Across the world.

F. M. HALLWARD.

NOT ON THE RECORDS

By FRED M. WHITE

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

SERGEANT DONALD MACNAUGHT, B Section, Frontier Police, came out of the Superintendent's office with his head in the air and the assurance that the commission provisionally promised him was as good as in his pocket. True, he was a stranger in the Harris Fork district, having been moved there quite recently for a specific purpose, and this was undeniably a drawback out there in the wild, where local knowledge is a big asset in the tracking down of criminals. But then Macnaught had a proper conceit of himself, which usually goes with a Scotchman who happens to be born in Belfast. And, moreover, Superintendent Donovan had given him a free hand, so it was up to him to justify himself and, in the course of time, emerge triumphantly in the silver stripes that marked the higher rank.

And, so far as the ambitious Sergeant could see, the matter was pretty plain sailing. He had laid his plans before the Superintendent, after a careful study of the map, and the great man had been pleased to nod his approval. Beyond question, the quarry, in the shape of that reckless desperado Jimmy Hayes, had been marked down only the day before in the settlement on the far side of the foot-hills which were known as Eagle Ridge. Hayes had come there in one of his meteoric flights, ostensibly to bury his wife, but really to display himself in his most heroic light to an admiring community which, be it whispered, tendered to the desperado its entire sympathy. They were a wild, rather lawless lot out there, and brute force was a ritual. Besides, Jimmy Hayes was a man of undeniable courage and resource, a sort of Western Robin Hood, with a dash of Claude Duval, and in his more conventional days had been exceedingly popular. Then the wild blood in him had broken out, away down west at Dingo City, where he had found himself involved with a set of gamblers who had the temerity to try and rob him under the guise of a friendly game of poker. There had been trouble over that, and Hayes had got away, leaving one man for dead. That was merely an incident. He lay low till that was forgotten, then returned to Harris Fork, where he was in partnership with a sort of hybrid Jew called Marks — a partnership which for a time was exceedingly successful. This was owing almost entirely to Hayes's courage and resource, and it might have ended in fortune on both sides but for the fact that Hayes had journeyed once more to Dingo City, where there had been more trouble with his old antagonists, and where another of them had bitten the dust. There was a hue and cry after this, so that for many months it was impossible for Hayes to show himself at Harris Fork, and after a time rumour had it that he was dead.

At any rate, Harris Fork saw him no more for the best part of a year, during which his wife did not hear from him, though she always declared that he would come back one of these days.

She was a little, fragile flower of a woman, totally unfitted for those high, cold altitudes, with their terrible winter of snow and frost, but there was no denying her courage and her hopefulness that some day, when the partnership would be dissolved, she and Hayes could go down South. The partnership was dissolved, after Hayes's disappearance, by Marks, who cut it abruptly short with the statement that he had lost money over it, and that, so far as he was concerned, Mrs. Hayes could shift for herself. In other words, he robbed her in the most cold-blooded fashion, so that

she had to go out into the settlement and get her own living. And this she did until the hard work became too much for her, and just as winter was setting in, she died—murdered, the women said, to put money in the pockets of a scoundrel.

And then, on the day of her funeral, Hayes put in a dramatic appearance. Where he came from and how he knew what had happened, nobody could tell. He just appeared out of nowhere by the side of the grave, and when the ceremony was over he set out, with a cold grey eye and a grim line between his brows, to look for Marks. But Marks had somehow got to know what had happened, and he was nowhere to be found. He was found at last, and what Hayes regarded as an ill-directed shot smashed his shoulder-blade. Hayes probably left him for dead, and promptly disappeared. He would have stayed, in the ordinary course of events, and faced the music, but as there was a warrant out against him on two other charges, he probably realised the slenderness of his chances and vanished. Within an hour the Superintendent at Harris Fork was in full possession of the facts. He may have had his own ideas on the subject, but his duty was plain. He had to arrest Hayes, and, as he himself was wanted elsewhere, he had placed the matter in Macnaught's hands. The Sergeant worked it all out. He himself would ride over in the direction of Harris Fork, and two sections were telegraphed to meet him from the frontier on the far side of Eagle Ridge. They would thus take the criminal between them, and the rest would be easy.

So Macnaught mounted his horse and started out to cross fifteen miles of broken mountain country between the station and Eagle Ridge. He had his map in his hand, and a photograph of the criminal, together with his description He glanced at it again as he jogged along. Hayes, according to the printed matter, was a big, well-knit man, apparently about forty, with a clean-shaven broad face. The characteristics were not particularly marked, but it was good enough for Sergeant Macnaught, and he was feeling on good terms with himself as he made his way between the rocky passes to the high ground, with its fringes of pine, and visions of promotion lay before him. He was a kindly man, was Macnaught, despite the grim current of blood in his veins, because, you see, his mother had been Irish, and there were times when the sentimental mood dominated him.

He was not thinking of that now—he was thinking what the Superintendent had said, and he was just a little uncertain in his mind as to the weather. For the first big snows of the year were due, there had been a hard frost last night, and the weather has a great deal to say to the puny schemes of men in that wild North-West Territory. In the ordinary way the ride to Eagle Ridge was in the nature of a picnic, but if the snow came, then it might end in a race for life.

And over the high ground beyond, at the back of the nodding pines which looked down on Eagle Ridge, there were broken ragged splashes of cloud that gradually marshalled themselves together till the blackness of the pines was no blacker than the sky beyond. And then, when Macnaught was about half-way, the snow came down in earnest.

It began with fine particles like spray; then, as the wind increased, it howled and swirled round Macnaught's head till his eyes were blind and he could see but a few feet in front of him. It was as if the whole world had been blotted out in a deluge of white—a howling, roaring world with a wind thrumming in the pines like harp-strings. It went on until the horse pulled up and, trembling in every muscle, refused to go any further. Macnaught dropped out of the saddle and sheltered himself as best he could behind his faithful beast. He stood there for an hour, until he was frozen to the very marrow, until every object in the dreary landscape was wiped out, and until he had not the remotest notion where he was. The white spindrift was knee-deep, and still creeping upwards like a tide, and then for the first time Macnaught recognised his peril. He turned his back to the wind and looked in the direction whence he had come—that was, as far as he could look any way. So far as he was concerned, he might have been inside the Arctic Circle. He dared not go back; to go forward was equal madness. But ever and again a torn wrack in the cloud showed the crest of pines on the distant hill, and he knew, at any rate, that Eagle Ridge lay over there. So he struggled on, walking his horse with increasing difficulty at every step, until he could move no further, then he fell helplessly to his knees, and the horse rolled over by his side.

How long this had been going on he did not know. He could only guess, by the fading light, that it was late in the afternoon.



"The one man there who could have told them everything sat sucking at his dead pipe and stared into the stove."

and that, unless a miracle happened, he would never see Harris Fork again. A certain dumb apathy filled him, a certain carelessness as to the future. Well, he had done his best, and there was an end of it. He would not be the first Mounted Policeman who had perished by the wayside in the execution of his duty.

It seemed to him that he slept a little, and that presently he woke with something calling him. The wreaths of snow were still volleying round his head, the white battalions of the gale were still screaming in his ears, and he was frozen to the very soul. But surely someone was calling to him, some voice in his ear beckoning him on? Then he recognised the sound as that of the bark of a dog.



"Either Hayes had got away down the pass in the direction of the valleys . . . or he had been caught in the big storm and had perished."

A dog meant human companionship, a sledge, perhaps, and the thought of it galvanised Macnaught into life He struggled to his feet and yelled at the top of his voice. Then the dog barked again, and something that sounded like a faint "Hello!" was borne on the breast of the gale. Again Macnaught shouted, and this time a man unmistakably replied.

"Here we are," the voice said. "I'll find you."

It seemed an unconscionably long time—indeed, it was upwards of an hour—before two hands were placed under Macnaught's arms and he was dragged to his feet. As if conscious that help was at hand, the horse rose, too. And then followed a breathless struggle for life, which ended in another hour in front of a black cavity in the hillside—in other words, a cave with its back to the wind, into which Macnaught was dragged, together with his weary charger. Something trickled down his throat, he was conscious of warmth and the cuddling caress of furs, and then he realised that he was in a bit of a cave in which a fire was burning, and that a big man, with a careworn face and a brown beard streaked with grey, was looking at him in a kindly fashion.

"That was a close call," the stranger said.

"Aye, it was that," Macnaught replied. "But for you, I was down and out all right, and I'm not going to thank you. You must have had a bit of a struggle getting me here."

"Well, you are here," the stranger said. "And now let me give you something to eat. You snuggle up in those furs whilst I fry a rasher of bacon. This isn't going to last long; we'll have the frost back before daylight."

Macnaught ate presently and got his pipe going. Then he and his rescuer began to talk. The other man had been caught on his way through a pine path whence he was going down to the plain and the milder climate on the other side of the divide. He had been trading up at Eagle Ridge, and had, perhaps, been a little too anxious to get through the pass before the first snows fell. Luckily for him, he had his provisions and his dogs, and he had hit the cave in the hillside just at the psychological moment. His name, it appeared, was Prosser, and he was principally concerned

in the fur trade. Then, under his eyes, he glanced casually at Macnaught's uniform.

"Policeman, ain't you?" he asked.

"That's so," Macnaught admitted. "I was on my way to Eagle Ridge on business."

The other man appeared to be interested.

"I think I can guess," he said. "After Jim Hayes, ain't you?"

There was no occasion to deny the fact, so Macnaught admitted it. He wanted to know if the other knew anything about the criminal.

"I have met him," Prosser said. "Fact is, Jim and I were quite good friends at one time. He's not a bad sort, but has a devil of a temper, and is quite reckless of consequences when he is roused. I was down at Dingo City, and saw both those troubles he was in there. And you can take it from me, stranger, that it wasn't his fault either time. And as to that poisonous scoundrel Marks, I ain't blamin' Jim in the least. When you know how he suffered at that man's hands, and how his wife's death was entirely due to that villain, you would have been sorry for Jim, policeman though you are."

"I am sorry for him now," Macnaught said. "But then my private opinion has got nothing to do with it. If half I hear is true, Marks asked for all he got."

"Aye, he did that," Prosser said. "I knew Mrs. Hayes well, and a dearer little woman—— But I'm not going into that. So you expect to get hold of Jim, eh?"

"Sure to," Macnaught said laconically. "He must have been mad to have come back like that."

"Well, I don't know," the other man drawled, as he sucked thoughtfully at his pipe. "Jim was sure fond of that pretty little wife of his. And I think, Sergeant, if you had ever seen her——"

Prosser broke off and stared intently into the stove as if he could see visions. He stroked his beard with the streaks of grey in it, and his eyes had a far-away look in them.

"I knew Jim Hayes pretty well," he went on, "and I knew what he had to put up with. A plucky little woman, she was, and never said a word when Jim made up his mind to come up here prospecting in the mines. Not as he ever meant to stay. His idea was to make a fortune and get South, and he was in a hurry, too, because he could see what the winters hereabouts were doing for his missus. And then he struck it, him and Marks together, and he did all the work and took all the risk—he had plenty of that, let me tell you—until he won through and made Marks's fortune. Then there was that trouble down in Dingo City. He ought never to have got into that by rights, but, as I am telling you, he was always a headlong, impulsive sort of fool, and he wasn't quite as good at poker as he thought he was. But he wasn't going to be robbed, all the same, and that was the cause of the trouble. Then he must needs go back there again, right amongst 'em, and that time he had to fight for his life, whatever folks may say. And if the Sheriff hadn't been in it, and hadn't been half afraid of the gang, no more would have been heard of it; but they made it out wilful murder, and Jim, he had to fly. Couldn't come back any more, couldn't see his wife, though he wrote to her—wrote her a letter that she never got, because Marks saw to that. And when he heard the truth, it was too late. He came back to attend his wife's funeral and kill Marks, and, if I know anything of Jim, he's plum sorry he didn't succeed. I am telling you all this, Sergeant, because I know you are after Jim—I knew it as soon as I saw your uniform. You were going to catch him between two fires the other side of Eagle Ridge, and, but for this storm, you probably would have done so. Now, isn't that right?"

"Perfectly right," Macnaught agreed. "But I doubt if we shall do it now. He's probably perished in this storm, and, after what you have told me, I am not sorry, though, mind you, there was promotion waiting for me."

"If you succeeded, eh? Well, perhaps you will yet."

"Oh, well, it's no pleasant job, mine," Macnaught said in half extenuation.

"I see—you have got to do as you are told?"

"That's right," Macnaught agreed. "But never mind about Hayes. You saved my life. It was a million to one against my getting through, and almost that against us finding our way here. And you must have known that, though you didn't mind taking your life in your hands with about as much chance of finding me as if I had been no more than a flake of snow. But you did it, and I don't know how to thank you."

"Oh, that's all right," Prosser said casually. "It's more thanks to the dog than to me."

He indicated the well-fed dog and the horse standing patiently in the corner, and refused to hear any more. So they sat there

in the warmth, half buried in their furs, listening to the dying storm outside, and conscious presently of the increasing cold. Then Prosser rose and looked outside into a still white world where the wind had died to nothing, and overhead the stars, like spilt sheaves of golden grain, burned against a sky of granite.

"It will be fine going in the morning," Prosser said. "Hard as iron in an hour or two, by which time, with any luck, I'll be through the pass down on to the plains. But it will come back again. It will come again before noon."

With that he turned in, and the two men slept. It was broad daylight and well into the marrow of the morning before Macnaught crept out of his furs, only to find that Prosser and his team had gone. They must have been gone for some time, for the stove had burnt low, and the bacon which Prosser had cooked for his guest's breakfast lay tepid in its pan. Macnaught wondered at this sudden flight, until he recollected his host's prophecy that the storm would break again before long. Outside, the snow was frozen so hard that the tracks of the sledge were none too well marked. Over behind Eagle Ridge there was a violet haze, and near at hand a faint murmur within the pines that warned Macnaught of what was coming in the near future. So he hurried through his breakfast and slung himself on the back of his horse presently, and crossed the frozen plain in the direction of the settlement. He hurled along almost recklessly, for long before he reached Eagle Ridge the white cohorts were dancing about his head, so that he made the town and the big general store there with some difficulty. No sooner was he inside, seated in front of the stove, before the storm came down again in earnest. He sat there, turning over the events of the past few hours in his mind, and hoping that Prosser was through the pass before the demons of the air broke out again.

There were half a dozen men seated round the stove, members of the settlement, hard, lean settlers, miners and others, discussing the weather in their slow and deliberate way, when the door of the store was flung open and three men entered. Macnaught recognised them at a glance. They were the sergeant and two troopers who had been told off to help him. One look into their faces, and Macnaught knew that they had failed. And the other men seated round the stove looked, too. They wanted no one to tell them what this detachment of Mounted Police was doing in Eagle Ridge. Macnaught saw a smile pass from face to face, a smile of quiet triumph, as he knew. and an indication that these people here were all on the side of Hayes. And they knew that justice had been baffled.

"Hello! So you've got here?" Macnaught's fellow-sergeant greeted him. "Any luck?"

"Most infernally lucky to get here," Macnaught said.

"Same here," the other man responded. "The storm caught us last night, and we had to stop. Question, where is he now? Any of you men seen Jim Hayes?"

Again the slow smile went round the stove like a mental telegraphy. The police had failed, and every man listening rejoiced in the fact. A lean individual seated in a corner turned slowly to the questioner.

"Not since yesterday morning," he drawled. "Jim, he come unexpected, just out of nowhere, as it might be. And we 'uns here thinkin' him dead, and not one of us expecting him. He didn't come as you 'uns come now, sitting round the stove and passin' the time o' day. He come and stands by the side o' the grave where we was burying that wife o' his. It were yesterday mornin', an' most of us had turned out, because, you see, Jim's wife, she were sort o' popular, an' there wasn't one of us as wasn't ready to lend her a helpin' hand. She'd have died earlier, she would, but for some of us."

"Well, get on," the Sergeant said impatiently.

"You asked for facts an' I'm givin' 'em you, pard," the old man went on. "If ever a woman was murdered, it were Jim Hayes's wife. And who murdered her? It were that pesky skunk of a Marks—him as is lyin' in his hut now with a bullet through the shoulder that ought to have killed him, the dirty swab. Not as we knew it, because we didn't know as the claim had turned out so well. But we know it now, because yesterday, Jim he up and told us."

"Oh, do get on!" the Sergeant exclaimed.

"Oh, I'm comin' to it all right, mister. There we was round the grave of the whitest little woman in the State, and she done to death by Marks because he thought her husband was gone, and that he could rob her of what was her due, and she working to keep body and soul together, and half dying o' the cold! And if we'd only known

it, we'd have had his black heart out o' him long ago!"

The Sergeant stirred impatiently, but nothing seemed to disturb the even tenor of the speaker.

"We was standin' round the grave," he said, "an' parson, he just spoke his last piece, when there comes a man pushing his way through the crowd, right and left, and he stands by the side o' the grave an' looks down at it sorrowful like, though his face was hard enough as if it had been frozen. And there 'e stands, and we wonderin', till I looks at 'im again, with his bowed head and bent shoulders, and that brown beard o' his with the streaks o' grey in it, an' I says to myself: 'By the livin' Moses, if it ain't Jim Hayes!' An' Jim Hayes it was—aye, Jim right enough."

The old man paused, with some sense of the dramatic values, and gazed triumphantly around him. Macnaught sat there, the illumination almost blinding him.

"Stop a moment," he said, in a voice that he hoped was steady. "How long had Jim Hayes had a beard? From our description of him——"

"I don't know nothin' about that," the old man said obstinately. "He used to be smooth-faced, but he's got a beard now right enough, and it was Jim, too. I calls out, and the others see I was right, an' Jim, he turns to us when it was all over, and he asks where Marks was, and when we'd heard his story we told him. So he lays out for Marks, an' late in the afternoon he got him. Left him for dead. Then he gets his team together and off he goes. And that's the truth, Sergeant, as any man around the stove will tell you."

A long silence followed, whilst every man was turning the problem over in his mind. Either Hayes had got away down the pass in the direction of the valleys on his way to the frontier, where he would be safe, or he had been caught in the big storm and had perished. As to this, they would know in time. But the one man there who could have told them everything sat sucking at his dead pipe and stared into the stove.

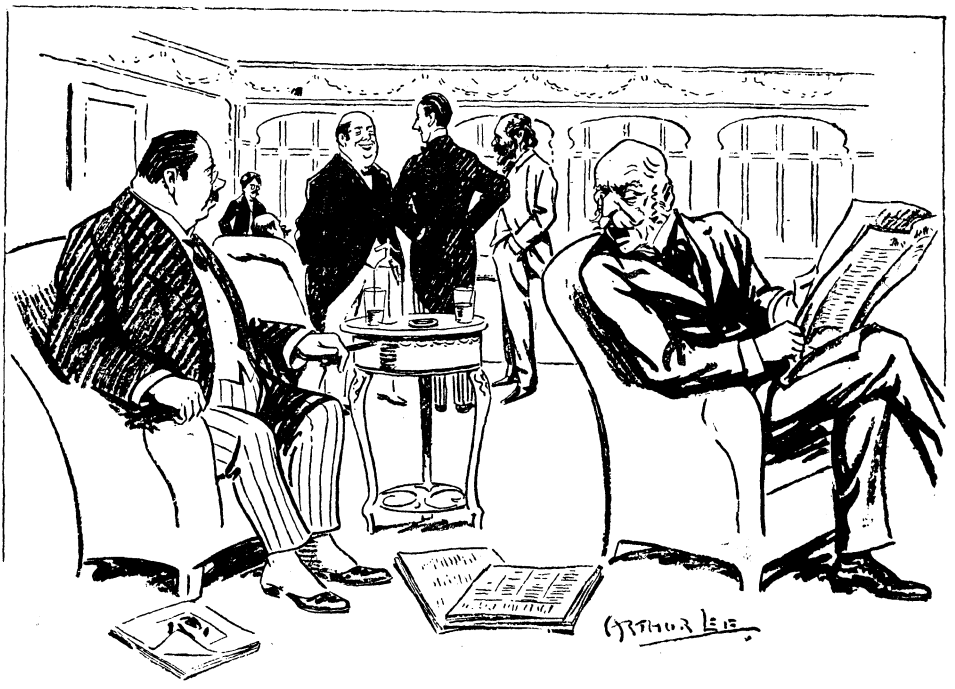
For Macnaught knew that Hayes had got away in safety, and, so far as he was concerned, there was one incident in the chronicles of the North-Western Police that would never be told.

SEA NOCTURNE.

LIGHTS on the sea-line go,
Vibrating to and fro,
Errant, mysterious, low,
Soon bright, soon dwindled;
But that one steadfast spark
That cleaves the tangible dark,
For what all-fortunate bark
Is it enkindled?

With far-flung beam it stands,
On rough and perilous lands,
Warning with upraised hands
The grey shipmasters;
Why did no beacon free
Flare out o'er Life's broad sea,
To warn and presage me
Of Love's disasters?

MAY BYRON.



SPEAKING GENERALLY.

JONES: Hullo! There's Tomkins, who's just got in for Blytheborough. He's one of the revolting Liberals, isn't he?

OLD CLUBMAN: Personally, sir, I consider *all* Liberals revolting!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

MY FIRST BANK ACCOUNT.
By Grace Fordham Spence.

FOR years past I have longed to have a bank account of my own, because a lot of my friends have, and swagger about it. But I never liked to ask him for one, because he has always kept me well provided with money, and never murmured at the bills put before him. Of course "him" and "he" is the happy man who has the privilege of paying for my board, lodging, clothes, jewellery, etc., in return for which I do him the inestimable service of spending the money that he earns. The other day I placed an unusually large collection of bills on his dressing-table, which is my delicate way of drawing his attention to them. He stuck them in his pocket, all except one, upon which he wiped his razor—his delicate way of drawing attention to the fact that he had used up all the scraps of paper hung on the looking-glass.

In the evening he brought back the bundle of bills and corresponding cheques, and remarked brutally that he didn't see why he should have the bother of drawing cheques as well as earning the money. Then he produced two more, saying that one of them was for the bill on which he had wiped his razor. He had taken note of the amount and name; it was for the "dram shop," the pleasant name he applies to big Oxford Street drapers, declaring that no woman can pass their shop without going in to buy something. The other was for one hundred pounds, and made payable to little me.

"What's this for?" I asked.

"Oh, it's *not* a present," he replied; "it's for you to open a bank account with and to pay bills with. When it's running dry, let me know, and I'll fill it up again."

"But how am I to open it, and at what bank?" I began.

"Oh, the nearest branch of any big bank will do, and open it in the usual way."

Then he hastily took the pink tape off a big bundle of papers, and I durst not ask any more.

Next morning we went to look for the bank that was to have the honour of my account. The "we" was myself and my sister, who considers herself a financial authority. We were going to walk into the nearest bank, when she recollected there was one in a far handsomer building a hundred yards further. After studying them both carefully, we came

to the conclusion the further one was safer, for the rent must have been twice as big, and it had a much larger brass plate. I confess that I felt a little hurt that it was the sub-manager, and not the real manager, who took charge of me. Of course he made no trouble about opening an account—not likely—and he gave me a funny little cheque book, and a sort of washing book with a black leather cover and a wallet, and another funny one that I did not understand, which he called a "paying in" book. We were just marching off, when he said: "What about your signature, madam?"

"Well, what about it?" I said, and I regretted the phrase, for one of the girls behind the counter tittered. Of course they ought not to have girls in banks: it doesn't inspire confidence.

Then I explained that I wrote my name in several different ways, sometimes with and sometimes without a hyphen, and he said that would never do, and I must always sign cheques in the same way, which seems ridiculously narrow-minded, but men are so fussy about details; and he made me sign my name in a book, and, being anxious to oblige him, I immediately made a copy of this signature on the back of my cheque book, so as to be certain of signing the same way every time. The man smiled rather provokingly, and observed: "That's a very good method of yours, madam, and it will save a lot of trouble to anyone who wishes to forge your signature to have a specimen before him." And that horrid girl giggled again—one of those girls who look as though they were born with a pince-nez. I hastily blotted the signature out, making a dreadful mess with the ink, and marched home.

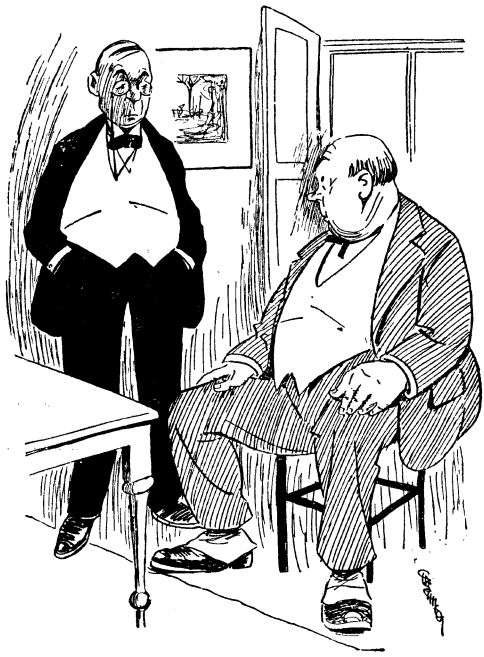
Funnily enough, I had no need to draw a cheque for several days, which was rather disappointing. However, on the Friday—always an unlucky day—Jane, our maid, who, alas, constitutes the whole of the present obtainable staff, asked for her wages, and I proudly drew a cheque for her. At least, I drew two, since my sister pointed out that the first had not got the signature we agreed upon with the sub-manager. I did it very carefully, copying a model I had in the shape of a cheque which had just arrived for my husband, whose letters I always open—at least, those that come to the house, and not to his chambers.

"What's this, mum?" said Jane.

"For your wages," I answered. "Take it to the bank and they'll give you the money."

"I don't hold with banks, mum," she said, "for my pore father lost a lot of his savings in a goose club."

"You go off to the bank, Jane," I replied, "and they will give you money for that piece of paper." And off she went, after spending three-quarters of an hour dressing herself and titivating, in order to fascinate the bank manager—at which waste of time I smiled, guessing that she would have to deal with one of the girl clerks instead.



A CERTAIN CURE.

PATIENT: I've tried no end of remedies, doctor, but I get stouter every day. Now, what can you suggest to reduce it?

SPECIALIST: Have you tried strap-hanging on the Underground at busy hours?

Twenty minutes later Jane burst in the room like an air raid.

"I wish to give a month's notice, mum, and I'm leaving to-morrow, and I know I am not entitled to, but you can keep that piece of paper instead of a month's wages." And she flung the cheque on the table crumpled up into a ball.

"What does this mean?" I asked haughtily.

"I went to the bank, mum, as you told me, mum, and looked about for a man to give the piece of paper to, but could only see girls, and one of them—a cat with gig-lamps on—says, 'What do you want, miss?' and I says, 'I want the money for this.' And she looks at it and says, 'You will have to pay this in through your bank account, and you will have to write your name on it first.'

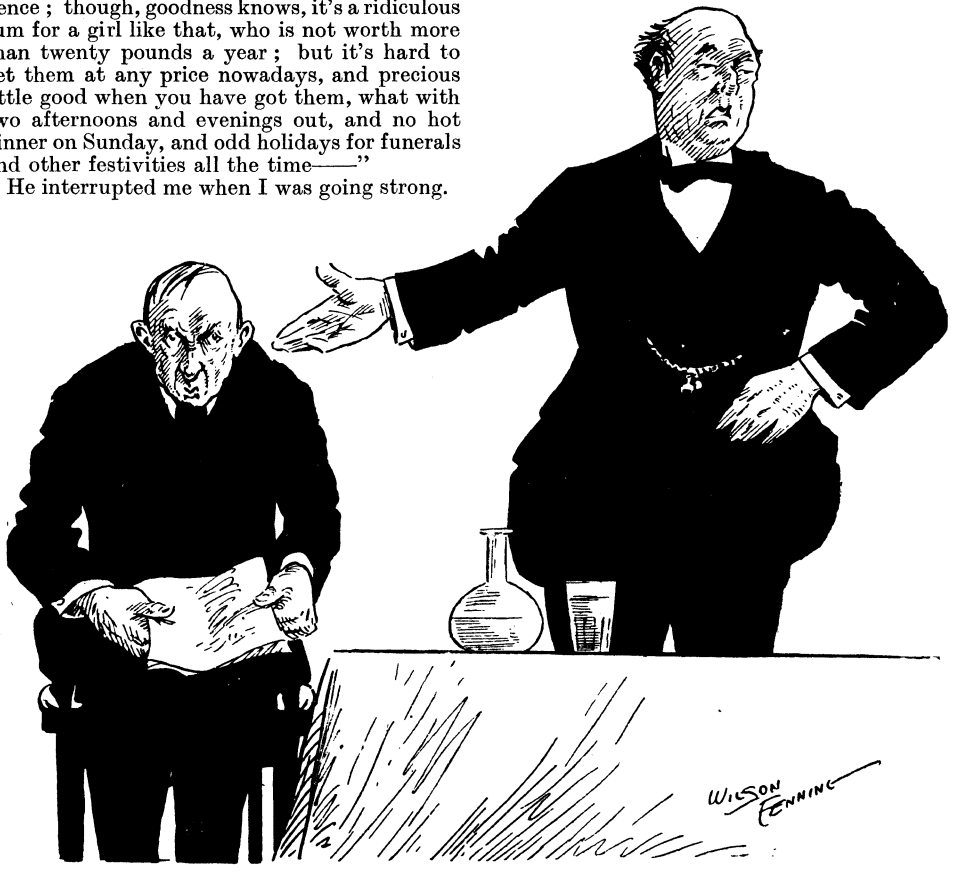
"'What's that?' says I. 'Whose leg are you pulling? I suppose you haven't got the money handy, and are making an excuse. I knew there was some catch about it.' And she says: 'Don't you talk to me like that, my girl!' And I says, 'Who told you to call me "my girl"?' And then a large man with flat feet and a uniform came up and says, 'Now, off you go. This ain't a post office, for you to stand arguing in.' And he hustles me out." And then Jane burst into tears and declared she had

never been so treated in her life, which was probably true.

It didn't take me three-quarters of an hour to dress and titivate. I was inside that bank within five minutes. "I want to speak to the manager," I said with dignity, and out came the sub-manager. I thought he would do.

"Nice kind of bank this!" said I. "There are a hundred pounds of my money you have had for nearly a week, and you won't pay my first cheque, a month's wages to my maid—only four pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence; though, goodness knows, it's a ridiculous sum for a girl like that, who is not worth more than twenty pounds a year; but it's hard to get them at any price nowadays, and precious little good when you have got them, what with two afternoons and evenings out, and no hot dinner on Sunday, and odd holidays for funerals and other festivities all the time——"

He interrupted me when I was going strong.



THE APT COMPARISON.

CHAIRMAN (introducing candidate for municipal honours): Well, ladies and gentlemen, I'll say nothing further about our worthy friend on my right—it would only be "painting the lily"!

"Excuse me, madam, but really we are not in fault. The cheque is crossed, madam."

"Crossed?" I said. "What does that mean? It's just like one that my husband received this morning."

"Naturally, madam; but those two lines you have drawn across it mean that it's crossed, and only payable through a bank."

"And isn't this a bank?" I asked triumphantly.

As I uttered this, he said "Oh, *mon Dieu!*"—in English, of course—and hit himself violently on the forehead with his open hand. And the girl with the gig-lamps suddenly choked and nearly fell off her stool, and dropped a lot of coppers she was counting. The man pulled himself together, controlling himself with an effort.

"I think you informed me your husband is a barrister, madam. The best thing would be for you to explain the whole affair to him."

So I marched out with the piece of paper and took a taxi to my husband's chambers, as I thought he ought to know at once how the bank was behaving, and we nearly had our first quarrel—in twenty years; for the brute laughed uproariously, and then said it was a glorious thing for the country that at last women had got the vote, thanks to which, no doubt, we should soon get rid of our financial entanglements. However, he stopped laughing when I told him that Jane was leaving; and despite our explanations and entreaties, and the offer of an extra ten pounds a year, she has left. With my husband's help, I have drawn out all the money and closed the account: cash is good enough for me.

THE VEGETARIAN POET.

(A writer complains that only one poet has sung the praises of the kitchen garden. We will now strive to remedy this state of affairs.)

Some poets go into the garden,
But only have eyes for the rose,
And their hearts against cabbages harden.
Oh, number me not amongst those!

Of the plot that's reserved for the kitchen,
Loud pæans of praise I will shout,
So come to that region bewitchin'
Where the brussels do nothing but sprout.

Sweet thoughts of cool salads come gushing,
As I gaze on the lettuce and beet,
And note the tomato is blushing
For joy that it's ready to eat.

The scent of the sage, which is blending
With onions, brings tears to my eye.
To think of the beautiful ending
Reserved for them both by and by.

Yet one thing my feelings will harrow:
It's not that the peas suggest lamb,
But the sight of an innocent marrow
That's doomed to be turned into jam!

"I'm sorry, young man," said the chemist, as he eyed the small boy over the counter, "but I can only give you half as much castor oil for the money as I used to."

The boy blithely handed him the coin. "Never mind," he remarked. "The stuff's for me."

THE census-taker runs up against many amusing experiences. Chief among these are the explanations some people offer for the various answers they make to questions put to them.

One of the census collectors asked a woman whether she could read. She answered rather hesitatingly that she could not, and then hastened to explain:

"I never went to school but one day, and that was in the evening, and we hadn't no light, and the teacher didn't come."



DESSERT IN THE NURSERY.

MOTHER: Johnnie, did you give Kitty the lion's share of that orange, as I told you to do?
KITTY: No, mummie, he didn't give me any at all.
JOHNNIE: Well, how could I? Lions don't eat oranges.

A POLITICAL speaker was criticising the policy of the Government in relation to the Income Tax.

"Yes," he said, "they'll keep cutting the wool off the sheep that lays the golden eggs until they pump it dry!"

A WAYSIDE TRAGEDY.

By A. F. Hutt.

"WELL, good-bye," I said. "Thunder is panting to start. Sure you won't come?"

"Please take it away" said my wife. "I'm certain it will blow up."

I waved adieu, threw in the clutch, and with a roar and a lurch my gallant little Ford cruised odorously down Chestnut Avenue. We reached the high-road without mishap, and Thunder settled down to a steady "twenty."

We were nearing Dullditch, when a man squatting by the roadside began to wave frantically. I pulled up reluctantly and took stock of the wayfarer. He wore a Norfolk jacket, knickerbockers, and a knapsack, and in his right hand he held a heavily studded boot.



NO MIXING

MRS. O'HARRITY: Now put in another pint.
MILKMAN: Why didn't ye ask for a quart at first an' be done with it?
MRS. O'HARRITY: Och, bless yer soul! One pint is fer meself an' t'other for Mrs. Casey.

"Awfully sorry to bother you, but I've gone lame!" he shouted, brandishing the boot.

I left Thunder snorting in the middle of the road, and moved towards the tramp. He stared at me and then sat upright. "Why, it's Billy," he cried—"Billy with his little box of tricks!"

"James," I said coldly, "when will you learn wisdom? Tramping the countryside like a pedlar! Can you manage to hop over to the car if I lend you an arm?"

He clambered aboard, and proceeded to talk as I cranked up the machine.

"Quite so," I said, as I urged the unwilling car uphill, "but why the atrocious knickerbockers? A walking tour is excellent, and no man can be held responsible for a sprained ankle, but knickerbockers with your calves...."

"Where are we going?" grunted James, as we breasted the hill.

"To Dullditch," I replied. "I have a few purchases to make, and then we will take the short cut home to dinner and a doctor."

"Oh, I don't need a doctor," protested James. "Just an ordinary sprain, you know. Needs a rest, that's all."

I spent a busy half-hour in the village, executing my wife's commissions and dispatching numerous hysterical telegrams on behalf of James, before starting home.

My short cut proved exceedingly rough going, and Thunder panted in an alarmingly asthmatic fashion. I let the car out to its limit, and we went round a nasty curve on two wheels, with James muttering darkly of Tanks. There followed a sickening lurch, and Thunder stopped dead. As I got out to investigate, I became aware of a strident voice hailing me. "Hey, mister," said the voice, "I've got yer number." And a yokel came quickly round the bend. "Jarge!" he yelled into the distance. And then, fixing me with a baleful eye, "I've got yer number," he repeated.

A moon-faced constable emerged sheepishly from the hedge and confirmed the rustic's statement.

"Nonsense, man!" I said sharply. "We

were only doing about twenty. It's impossible to scorch on a road littered with half bricks."

"It ain't the speed," said the rustic; "it's this 'ere!"—and dangled an exceedingly thin and very dead fowl before our eyes.

James shrank back into the car. "Take it away, my good fellow!" he said testily. "Why don't you look after your hens instead of letting them gad about the road?"

"No, you don't," said the yokel, with a cunning grin. "You run over the 'en, and a rare good layer yon was, and you pays for 'er, or I'll 'ave the lor on yer!"

He nodded towards the constable, who hitched up his belt and produced a notebook from his tail-pocket.

I looked at my watch, and decided to settle the matter out of court. "How much?" I said curtly.

"Ten shillings," said he, caressing the deceased fowl.

After much argument I produced two half-crowns, tossed them to the yokel, and bade the law stand clear.

"Hi!" called James, as I started the engine.

The yokel advanced, and James leaned out perilously.

"Come here, fellow!" barked James. "I want to. . . ." And suddenly his arm shot out. "Righto! Fire away, Billy!" he shouted, and, as Thunder shot ahead, waved a mocking farewell before depositing the mass of feathers on the floor of the car.

"Not too bad," he chuckled, as the lamentations of the yokel died away. "We've got a souvenir for our money, anyway."

My wife was at the gate when we arrived. Her greeting lacked warmth—in fact, she was distinctly peevish about the time I had taken over the journey. "I asked you to bring the things in time for tea," she complained, "and it is now six o'clock."

"I'm sorry, dear," I said quickly, "but the fact is, James delayed me somewhat—he has sprained his ankle—and then we—er—stopped to purchase a fowl."

I produced our "bag." My wife inspected it gingerly.

"You had better assist Mr. Horner into the house," she said coldly.

She was still eyeing the bird when I came downstairs.

"Something wrong?" I ventured nervously.

"How much did you pay for this?"

I told her.

"Five shillings!" she screamed. "I suppose you think your stupid car ran over this fowl. Yes? I thought so. Ran over, indeed! You would believe anything," she said scornfully. "That fowl has been dead at least a week!"



THE EXPLANATION.

NEW RICH ONE: I'm a self-made man, sir.
NEW POOR ONE: Then you're a jerry-builder, sir.

THE old gardener's wife had been very ill, and, on seeing him, I asked him about her.

"Oh, ma'am," the old man replied sorrowfully, "the doctor don't give us no encouragement either way."

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WE shall be only too pleased to replace any article purchased during that or any other time which does not give entire satisfaction. Ciro Pearls are fully guaranteed.

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On receipt of One Guinea we will send you a Necklet of No. 1 quality Ciro Pearls, 16 ins. long (Gold Clasp 2/6 extra, and other lengths at proportionate rates), or a Ring, Brooch, Ear-rings, or any other jewel mounted with Ciro Pearls. If, after comparing them with real or other artificial pearls, they are not found equal to the former or superior to the latter, return them to us within seven days and we will refund your money. Two additional qualities can also be supplied, viz.: No. 2, Two Guineas, and No. 3, Three Guineas. The difference in quality corresponds to the difference in quality of the genuine pearl reproduced. Each is an actual reproduction of the real gem, but the more expensive Ciro represents the more expensive genuine necklet. Our booklet No. 10 contains designs of all new jewels (sent post free).

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We have no shop. Our Showrooms are on the First Floor, over Lloyd's Bank.

HUBBLY-BUBBLY.

By Leopold Spero.

"I BELIEVE in Home Rule," said my wife.

"With self-determination," I interposed.

"Maybe, but that involves a realisation of responsibility. In the question of tobacco ash and carpets, for instance."

"And cabbages and kings," I quoted.

My wife told me not to be irrelevant.

"It isn't irrelevant," I said. "Tobacco is connected with cabbages, and kings are connected with carpets. In fact, everything's connected with everything else, and there's no use denying it. So we had better leave it at that."

"No," said my wife, "we won't leave it at that. We are going to talk about tobacco ash and carpets. There should be no connection between them at all."

"If there is, my dear," I assured her, "it is pure accident."

My wife gave it as her opinion that when accidents occurred with a certain regularity they became the subject for preventive action.

"Unless you admit," she added, "that you are not responsible for your actions."

"You took me for better or worse," I reminded her.

"I suppose I did. But that is nothing to do with tobacco ash on carpets."

"It is. Some people say tobacco ash makes carpets worse. Some people say it makes them better."

"Nonsense!"

"I assure you it is so. In the reign of Habib Ib'n Kofi Koolah, the celebrated Persian monarch, there was a powerful school of thought among the carpet-makers which maintained that the ash of the seductive hookah, when allowed to fall upon the floor, imparted in the course of time an artistic impregnation of brownish-grey dust into the fabric of the carpet, and made it look antique."

"But it *was* antique," said my wife.

"No, it wasn't. It was modern at that time. I will bet you that most of the real old Persian carpets are full of tobacco ash dropped from hookahs in the days of the wise Habib Ib'n Kofi Koolah."

"It sounds very convincing," said my wife.

"It is perfectly convincing."



THE REASON.

"WHY, Norah, how dusty these chairs are!"
"Yes'm, there's nobody sat on 'em to-day, mum!"

"Except for one thing," she added, "and that is that you don't get ash when you are smoking a hookah."

"What do you know about it?" I asked.

"The hookah," said my wife, "is a water pipe, otherwise known as a hubbly-bubbly, and the smoker inhales the smoke through the water and expels it in large volumes from his face, much to the disconcertment of the surrounding guests."

"I don't believe it," said I. "Who has been telling you these things, my dear? Can't you take my word that the ash from the hookah improved the carpets of Habib Ib'n Kofi Koolah in the palmy days of Persia?"

"I'd love to, but unfortunately I have proof to the contrary."

"Where did you get it?"



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"In Johnson's Gigantic Universal Encyclopædia of General and Special Information."

"Good Heavens!" I cried. "I never knew we had one in the house."

"We hadn't," said my wife. "But a man brought one round this morning, and I contracted to buy it by instalments. I knew it would come in useful."

I got up, walked about the room, and tore my hair with rage. "What?" I cried. "At a time like this, when we've scarcely got two shillings to rub together and make a noise like a bank, you go round pledging my credit for mischievous volumes of unnecessary information!"

"I haven't pledged your credit yet," said my wife.

"I thought you said you had signed a contract to buy the rotten old thing."

"Not quite," said she. "I had a look at it, and then I came across this bit about the hookah, and it reminded me that I had a husband who always dropped cigarette and pipe ash on the carpets. So I said to the man: 'The very next time my husband does such a thing, I shall wire you to take a taxi up to the house, and I'll buy your encyclopædia there and then.' He was a nice man, and he said that it would be a jolly good idea. And there the matter stands."

I sat down and looked at my wife with a certain admiration.

"Wait a minute," said she. "Let me bring you an ash-tray before you light that cigarette."

She brought me an ash-tray and put it on the little table beside me.

"You are a wonderful woman," I said. "If you had lived in the time of Habib Ib'n Kofi Koolah——"

"And if you had been Caliph."

"Exactly," I said. "If I had been Caliph, I should have picked you out and engaged you to tell me the Arabian Nights. I really don't think you would have stopped at a Thousand and One, and they'd all have been good 'uns."



AN UNINTENTIONAL THEFT.

"Boo-hoo! 'E's got our dog!"

DURING the debate on Sir Robert Peel's tariff bill, the mention of the admission of asses duty free caused much merriment, and a member of the House, who had just read "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation," remarked that the House had, he supposed, passed the donkey clause out of respect to its ancestors. "It is a wise measure," commented a distinguished man of letters, "especially as it affects the importation of food; for, should a scarcity come, we should otherwise have to fall back on the food of our forefathers."

"And, pray, what is that?" asked an archæologist.

"Thistles," replied the other.

A SELF-IMPORTANT *nouveau riche*, who had lately been raised to the peerage, laid down a new novel as he sat in the club smoking-room, and remarked to an acquaintance: "So-and-so's new book. It looks pretty poor, and what an absurd title! What ridiculous titles authors seem to give nowadays!" "Do you think so?" said the other, who happened to be a friend of the author of the despised volume. "Well, if that is so, it is a mistake which they share with monarchs and governments."

BEAUTY CULTURE

Some Simple Recipes that give Startling Results

By MIMOSA

Getting Rid of Feminine Moustaches.

TO women who are annoyed by disfiguring downy hair growths a method of permanently eradicating the same will come as a piece of good news. For this purpose pure powdered pheminol may be used. Almost any chemist should be able to supply an ounce of this drug. The recommended treatment is designed, not only to remove the disfiguring growth instantly, leaving no trace, but also to actually kill the hair roots without irritating the skin.



How to have Thick and Pretty Hair.

SOAPS and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft, and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely, and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed ¼ lb. packages, which retail at half-a-crown. However, as this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, it really works out very cheaply in the end.

Blackheads, Oily Pores, etc.

THE new sparkling face-bath treatment rids the skin of blackheads, oiliness, and enlarged pores almost instantly. It is perfectly harmless, pleasant, and immediately effective. All you have to do is to drop a stymol tablet, obtained from the chemist's, in a glass of hot water, and after the resulting effervescence has subsided, dab the affected portions of the face freely with the liquid. When you dry the face you will find that the blackheads come right off on the towel, the large pores contract and efface themselves naturally and the greasiness is all gone, leaving the skin smooth, soft, and cool. This treatment should be repeated a few times at intervals of several days in order to make sure that the result shall be permanent.

Grey Hair Unnecessary.

ONE need not resort to the very questionable expedient of hair dye in order not to have grey hair. The grey hair can easily be changed back to a natural colour in a few days' time merely by the application of a simple, old-fashioned, and perfectly harmless home-made lotion. Procure from your chemist two ounces of tammalite concentrate and mix it with three ounces of bay rum. Apply this to the hair a few times with a small sponge and you will soon have the pleasure of seeing your grey hair gradually darkening to the desired shade. The lotion is pleasant, not sticky or greasy, and does not injure the hair in any way

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror: "If I could only tear off this old skin!" And do you know it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden; that would be too heroic a method, and painful, too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually—requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy, or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.

HOW IS IT DONE?

There's a most annoying person, one you doubtless all have met,
The man who always gets there—never has his plans upset;
Isn't subject to the worries which to human flesh belong,
And the things which floor his neighbours only make him come out strong.

If you say resorts are crowded, he replies: "I don't agree;
I found a splendid place, my boy, right opposite the sea.
Went down in ease and comfort in a nearly empty train."
"And the weather?" "Simply perfect! Never had a drop of rain."

When he views a State procession, he avoids the vulgar rush;
He arrives at the last minute, but he's never in a crush.
You were pushed about and hustled, and you never saw a thing,
But just where he was standing he "could almost touch the King."

When you say that present prices are enough to make one weep,
He will darkly hint at places where he gets things on the cheap:
Buys his boots for half-a-guinea, gets a hat for three-and-nine,
And a suit for fifty shillings—knows "a fellow in the line."

The coal and butter prospect never causes him alarm:
His uncle owns a colliery, his cousin runs a farm.
The bricks and mortar shortage, even, never makes him fret;
He's the only man in England who has found a house to let!

R. H. Roberts.

WILLY'S MATHEMATICS.

"WILLY," said the teacher, "if one banana costs twopence, how much will a dozen cost?"

Willy hesitated, then gave it up.

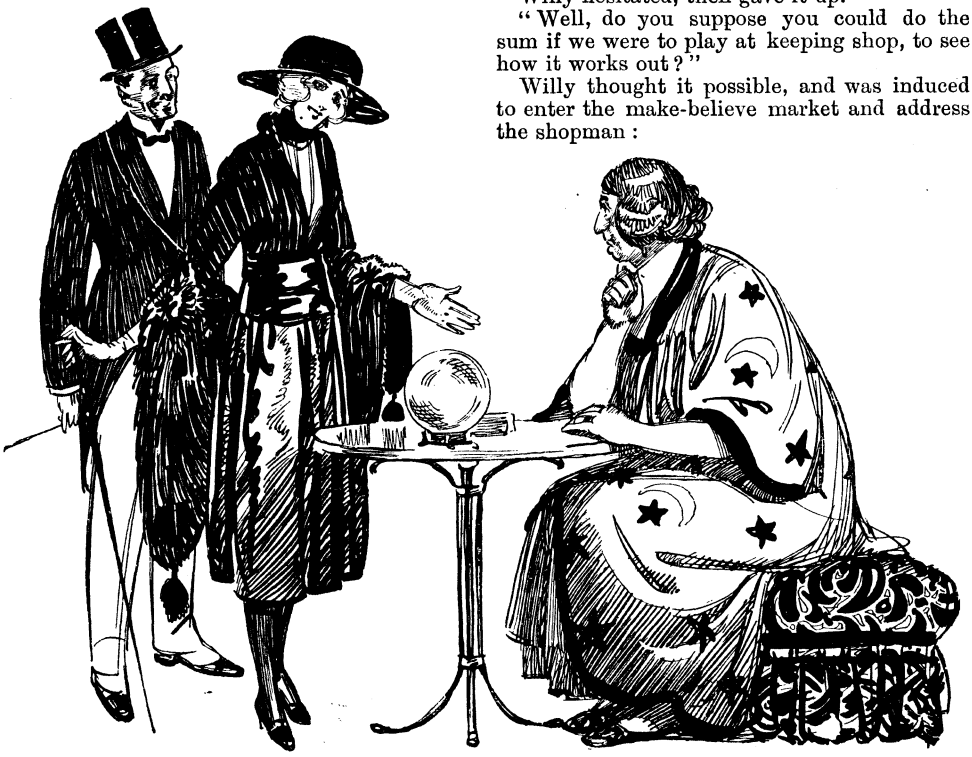
"Well, do you suppose you could do the sum if we were to play at keeping shop, to see how it works out?"

Willy thought it possible, and was induced to enter the make-believe market and address the shopman:

"Have you any good bananas to-day?"

"Some fine ones at twopence apiece," was the reply.

"I'll take a dozen," said Willy, digging into his pocket for imaginary cash. "And how much'll that be?"



A SHORT CUT.

"I WANT you to tell my past."
"I'd rather tell your future, lady—it wouldn't take so long."

HE: Why, Ethel, how can you say I don't love you as I used to?

SHE: Well, nowadays you hardly ever buy me anything you can't afford.

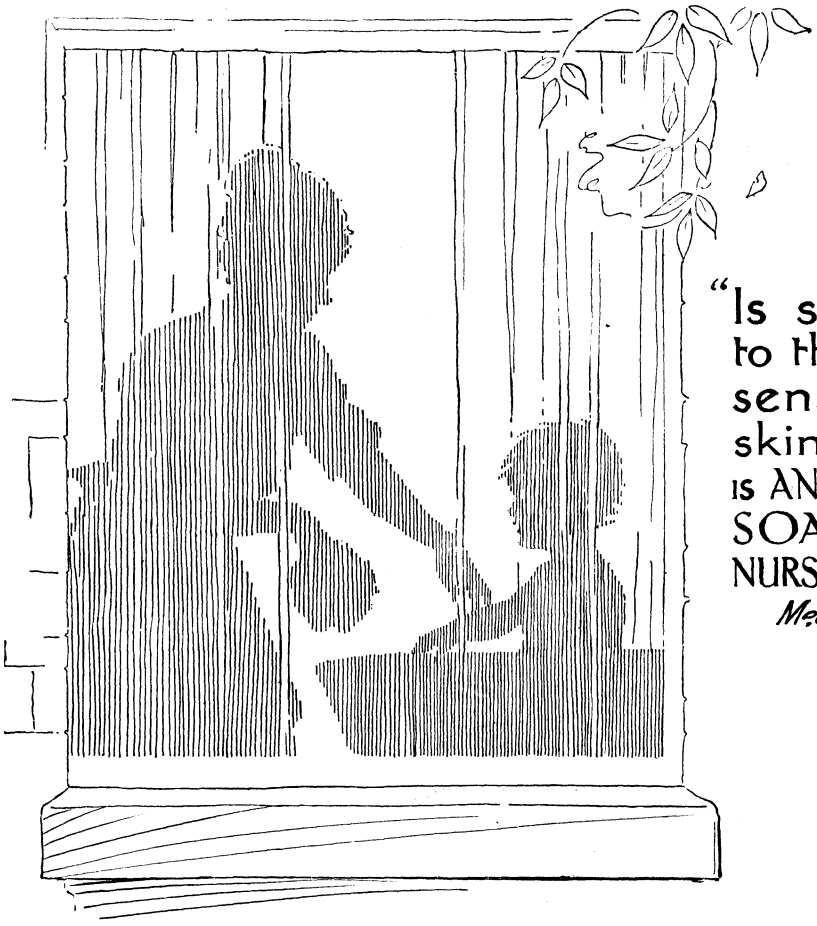
Facing Third Cover.]

THE WINDSOR

March



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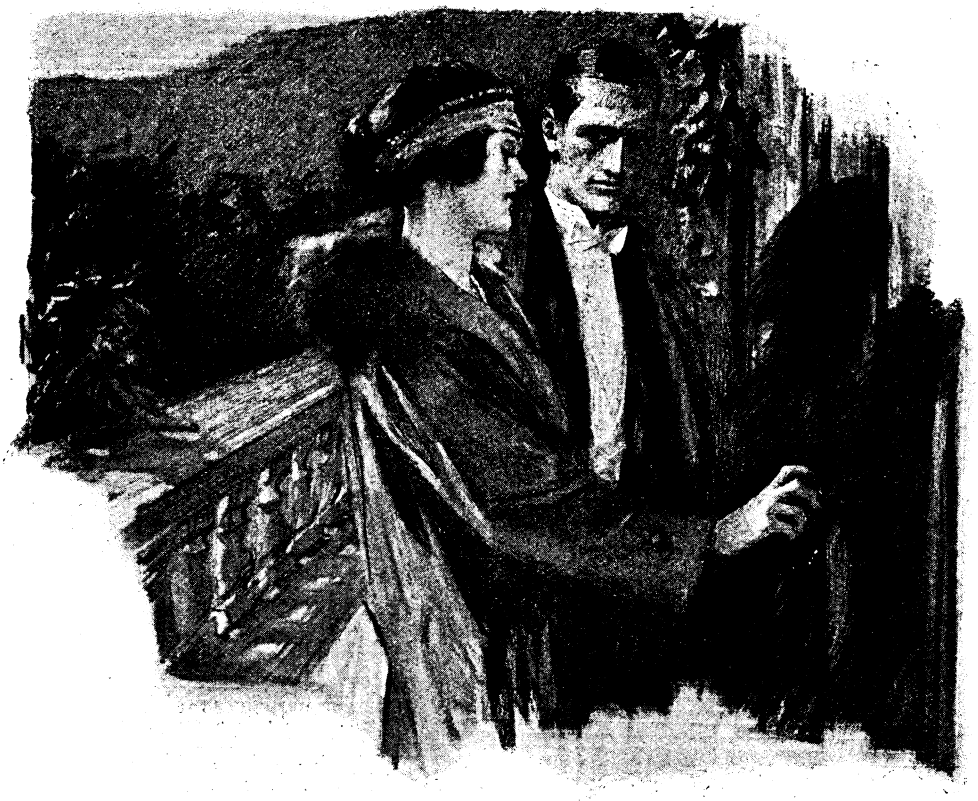
Protects from Infection





VIOLET.

By Balliol Salmon.



"'Didn't she ever think any more of the frog?'"
"'No,' said Anthony."
"'Then why did she kiss him?'"

IN THE THIRD PLACE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

WANTED—A gentleman-footman; country; good wages; would be allowed to keep dog.—Box Y.779, The Times, E.C. 4.

So ran the advertisement.

Within twenty-four hours from the time when it had first caught his eye, Major Anthony Lyveden, D.S.O., had applied for the situation.

Sitting in the garden of a little Hertfordshire inn, he drafted his application with the utmost care. All the time he tried to keep a tight hand upon his hopes—unruly and mettlesome fellows, which more than once had carried him into the meadow of Expectation before he knew where he was. There the going was splendid—till you came to the sunk fence. . . . The memory of one

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or two falls at this obstruction was too distressing for Lyveden to court another.

His letter, when finally settled, was comprehensive enough.

c/o The Leather Bottel,
Nr. Malory,
Herts.

Sir (or Madam),

I beg to offer myself for the situation advertised in yesterday's issue of "The Times."

I am twenty-nine, unmarried, a little over six feet in height, healthy and very strong. I have no physical defects.

I have just quitted the service of the Marquess of Banff. My departure was directly due to my inability to give such satisfaction as one member of his lordship's household required of me, but the Marquess, who is familiar with the facts, was so good as to say that, if and when I needed a "character," he would himself speak for me.

I left the service of my previous employer because that gentleman was going abroad, and so had no further need of a footman. That was my first situation.

I am accustomed to wait at table, answer the door, go out with the car, take care of silver, clean boots and knives, and carry coals; and I am ready to do anything that may be required of a man-servant. I have no objection to wearing powder.

I have been receiving seventy-two pounds per annum, but since, if I come to you, I may bring my dog with me, I shall be content with a much lower wage.

The dog in question—a Sealyham—is now recovering from distemper, and will not be fit to travel for another week, by which time I shall be ready to enter your service.

Should you desire to see me, I will come for an interview at your convenience.

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and shall be very grateful if you will inform me without delay if you are already suited.

I am, Sir (or Madam),
Yours obediently,
A. LYVEDEN.

Sunday, July 25th.

That he was an ex-officer, Lyveden deliberately omitted to mention; that he was a gentleman, he trusted that his style and handwriting would suggest. Had it been possible, he would have applied in person, not of self-confidence, but because he could have made plain one point, at any rate, upon which in a letter he feared to insist. This was that to have his dog with him he was willing to do his work for a shilling a day.

It was not until after his tea that Anthony fair-copied his letter. When it was signed and sealed, he slid it into a pocket and, telling the mistress of the inn that he would like his supper at eight, took up his hat from the settle and strolled out into the sweet-scented lanes.

Half a mile distant a pillar of lichened bricks stood by itself at a corner where two ways met. Here was enshrined a miniature once-red door—a toy of a door, to gladden a child's heart and set his fancies whirling, and be remembered, with another half dozen of trifles, so long as he lived. A slot in the door received His Majesty's mails. Anthony, who had used the box before, strolled leisurely in its direction, and, as he went, contemplated, first, the sweetness of emancipation, and, secondly, the drawbacks of having but four pounds seven shillings and a penny between himself and thraldom.

A painstaking adder of figures, I have audited the gentleman's accounts and found them correct to the farthing. He must pay for his terrier's sickness and have four guineas in hand against the dog's board and lodging, in case, after all, he was to stay at the Dogs' Home. For a shilling he gave to a beggar, because he was poorer than himself, I can find no receipt, but hope it is filed in Heaven. An eight-shilling meal stands out, among eightpenny teas, as a rare extravagance . . . I will wager a ducat that there was a lady upon the other side of the table.

Lyveden was about to commit his dispatch to the posting-box—in fact, his hand was outstretched—when, to the amazement of a cock-robin who frequented the pillar for company's sake, and had seen more letters posted than there were feathers upon his back, he hesitated, exclaimed, stared at the letter with knitted brow, and then thrust it back into his pocket.

The truth was that Lyveden had thought of the lady.

He strolled no further, but walked—and that furiously. There were times when he strode. By the time he had covered eight miles and was on his way home, he was tramping wearily. He visited the Home and learned that his dog was mending. For fear of exciting the patient, he would not go in, but promised to come the next day. Then he passed on, hardly noticing whither he went, but turning mechanically, when he had covered five miles, wrestling with arguments, grappling with circumstances,

and finally setting himself by the ears for a lovesick fool and a varlet in coat-armour.

He had seen my lady three times, though once was enough. At their first meeting he loved her. At their second he thanked God she had not known the tall footman with the rain on his face. At their third they had comforted one another.

Her dog, housed at the Dogs' Home, had brought her to Hertfordshire. Now that the poor little fellow was dead, Anthony flattered himself that he (Lyveden) might possibly bring her so far. And if he were to take this situation in the country—Heaven only knew where—she would come to seek him in vain, and would go empty away. That even if he stayed and she found him, and came to care for him, she would eventually go still more empty away, was a still uglier reflection . . Anthony was honourable, and there was the rub of rubs. That the shoe which Fate had tossed him was a misfit was nothing: that his sense of honour was chafed was intolerable.

"Now, Naaman . . . was a great man with his master, and honourable . . . but he was a leper."

After some consideration, Anthony decided grudgingly that, on the whole, leprosy was worse than footmanhood, though less degrading. After further consideration, he decided that, until he could be rid of his uncleanness, he was in honour bound to see my lady no more.

That it took him seven miles to work out this simple problem may seem ridiculous. Possibly it is. In any case it is highly illuminating, for it shows that the love which he bore Miss Valerie French was worth having.

When he posted his letter at a quarter to eight, the cock-robin, who had been brooding over his late transilience, was greatly relieved.

* * * * *

Upon the second day of August the one-fifteen from Waterloo, or what was left of it, rumbled in the wake of three other coaches—country cousins, these, that had never seen London—up the long blue-brown valley at the end of which lay the station of Mockery Dale. It was tremendously hot, for the afternoon sun was raking the valley from stem to stern, and since what little breeze there was blew from the south-east, the fitful puffs passed over the dip in the moorland and left it windless. This suited the butterflies admirably. Indeed, from all the insects an unmistakable hum of approval of the atmosphere rose steadily. Anthony could not hear it, any more than he could hear the lark which was singing merrily at a vast height above the shining rails, for the rumble of the composite train, but he saw and marked the sleepy smile of the valley, noted with satisfaction its comfortable air of contentment to be no part or parcel of a frantic world, and held his terrier Patch to the dusty window, that he might witness the antics of a couple of forest ponies, which were galloping away from the train and kicking up contemptuous heels at the interloper in an ecstasy of idle menaces, clown-like in their absurdity.

Patch saw the impudent frolic and, panting with excitement, evinced an immediate desire to leave the carriage and deal summarily with the irreverence, but a second later the sudden demands of a French bull-dog, sitting pert in a dog-cart which at a level-crossing was awaiting the passage of the train, superseded the ponies' claim upon his displeasure. The alien was scolded explosively.

A moment later the train had pulled into the station, and Lyveden and Patch got out. They were, it appeared, the only passengers to descend.

The only vehicle outside the station was a Ford car, rather the worse for wear. Sitting as drowsily at the wheel as the exigencies of the driver's seat would permit was a man of some thirty summers. From his appearance he might have been a member of the club of which, till recently, Anthony had been a member. His soft felt hat was cocked extravagantly over one eye to keep the sun at bay, and his country suit was, fortunately, of a cloth which age cannot wither nor custom stale, but whose like has not been woven since the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine came up out of the river of War.

As Lyveden appeared, carrying his luggage and preceded by Patch—

"No need to ask if you're for The Shrubbery," said the driver of the Ford lazily. "Shove your things in the back, will you?"

Anthony set down his suit-case and touched his hat.

"Very good, sir," he said.

"Here," came the airy reply, "you mustn't 'sir' me. I'm the comic chauffeur—your fellow-bondsman, to wit. Name of Alison." He extended a firm brown hand. "Not to put too fine a point upon it, I'm overwhelmed to meet you. With the slightest encouragement, I shall fall upon your neck.

The last footman was poor company, and took two baths in three months. My wife didn't try to like him. She's the parlour-maid."

Anthony took the other's hand like a man in a dream.

"I can't believe it," he said simply. "Is this a leg-pull?"

"No blinkin' fear," said Alison. "We're all in the same boat. What a topping dog!"

Anthony felt inclined to fling his hat upon the ground and yell with delight. Instead, he thrust his baggage into the car and, stepping in front of the bonnet, took hold of the starting-handle.

"Is it safe?" he said, straddling. "Or will she go round with my hand?"

"Well, we do usually get someone to stand on the step," said Alison, "but, if you like to risk it. . . ."

A moment later they were hurtling along a white-brown ribbon of road that sloped sideways out of the valley and on to the top of the moor.

Alison chattered away light-heartedly.

"You see in me," he said, "the complete chauffeur. With my livery on and two thousand five hundred pounds' worth of Rolls-Royce all round me, I'm simply *it*. My only fear is that, when you turn out beside me, the whole perishin' concern will be caught up to heaven. However. I really think you'll be happy."

"I believe you," said Lyveden.

"Of course, I don't do much indoors, but Betty says the housework's nothing. Anne agrees. She combines the duties of house-maid and my sister. Oh, we're all in it, I warn you. Of course, we do old Bumble and Mrs. Bumble proud. They deserve it. They're very kindly and easy-going, and we always try and give them just a shade more than they've a right to expect. He's a retired draper and proud of it. Plenty of money, no children. Very little entertaining. We have more visitors in the servants' hall than they do in the drawing-room. . . ."

The lazy voice purled on contentedly till the car leapt into a village gathered about the road.

"Hawthorn, I take it," said Lyveden.

"Brother," said Alison, "I will not deceive you. This is indeed that bourn from which no commercial traveller returns, for the most potent reason that none ever comes here. Thank Heaven, it's off their beat. The Shrubbery's half a mile on."

Two minutes later they swept up a shady drive, past the creepered front of a well-built house, and into a small courtyard.

As the emotions of the car subsided, a Cocker spaniel made her appearance, squirming with affection and good-will, and offering up short barks of thanksgiving by way of welcome.

"Hush, José, hush!" cried a pleasant voice, and the next moment Mrs. Alison appeared in a doorway, wearing the traditional habiliments of a smart maid-servant with a perfectly natural air.

When her sister-in-law, similarly attired, followed her into the yard, Anthony felt as if he had been pushed on to a stage in the middle of a musical comedy. . . .

Not until his introduction was over, Mrs. Alison had shown him his room—a simple sweet-smelling apartment, all pale green and white and as fresh as a daisy—and they were all four seated in a cool parlour about a hearty tea, did the feeling of unreality begin to wear off.

"There'll be just us four," said the house-maid. "The cook's a villager, and doesn't sleep in. She and her daughter, the kitchen-maid, feed together in the kitchen. They're a very nice pair, and seem to think more of us than they do of the Bumbles. It's really as good as a play. We pay the girl a shilling a week on the top of her wages, and for that she lays our table and serves our meals. I expect George has told you about the Bumbles. They're really two of the best."

"By the way," said Anthony, "oughtn't I to be reporting for duty?"

"Plenty of time," said Mrs. Alison. "I'll ask when I clear away tea. They'll want to see you, just to say they hope you'll be happy more than anything else. And now do ask some questions. I'm sure there must be hundreds of things you're simply pining to know."

Anthony laughed.

"To be absolutely frank," he replied, "I'm still a little bit dizzy. I've been on my beam ends so long that to fall suddenly on my feet, like this, is disconcerting. I've sort of lost my balance."

"Of course you have," said Alison, lighting a pipe. "Bound to. I feel rather overwrought myself. Let's go and cry in the garage."

"Don't take any notice of the fool," said his wife. "By the way, there's one thing I ought to tell you, and that is that Christian names are the order of the day. Off duty it's natural; on parade, since we three glory in the same surname, it's unavoidable.

I'm known as Betty, my sister-in-law's Anne, and that with the pipe is George."

"And I," said Lyveden, "am Anthony—at your service. This with the hungry look"—he picked up the Sealyham—"is Patch. As the latter is convalescent, all his days lately have been red-letter, and celebrated by the addition to his rations of a small dish of tea. Whether such a scandalous practice is to be followed this afternoon must rest with his hostess."

"I think," said Betty, "as he's a bona-fide traveller. . . ."

José, the soft-eyed spaniel, profited by the Sealyham's privilege. It was impossible that she should not receive equal consideration.

"You must forgive my staring," said George Alison, gazing upon Anthony, "but you just fascinate me. To think that you're not going to suck wind when drinking, or clean your nails with a fork, is too wonderful. Your predecessor's habits at table were purely Johnsonian."

Betty shuddered at the allusion.

"If he'd been decent," said Anne, "I could have borne it. But he was just odious. The idea that we'd come down in the world fairly intoxicated him."

"It's true," said George. "And when Val wrote and——"

A vicious kick upon his ankle silenced him abruptly.

"I beg your pardon," said Anthony, who had been busy with Patch.

"I was saying that—er—if you value your dog, and he's only just over distemper, I shouldn't let him run loose just yet. José's a terrible huntress, and she's sure to lead him astray. Stays out all night sometimes."

"Right oh!" said Anthony cheerfully.

It was manifest that Patch was going to have the time of his life.

When Betty returned from ushering their new footman into the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Bumble, she reviled her husband as he deserved.

"I forgot," he pleaded.

"Forgot!"—indignantly. "Well, if you forget and mention her name again, I'll—I'll prick your tires."

"Any way," said George, "my withdrawal was little short of brilliant. You'll admit that? Incidentally, her *protégé*'s an improvement on little Halbert, isn't he? I think we ought to have an appropriate supper to-night in his honour. What about killing the padded calf?"

Betty kissed him behind the left ear.

* * * * *

Long before Anthony had received his livery from the tailor at Brooch, he had settled down to his nice new life with heartfelt gratitude. The old zest of living had returned to him to stay. It was no longer necessary to make the best of things. From labouring in the trough of oppression he had been swept into waters more smooth than any he had dreamed of riding—a veritable lagoon of security and content.

At first, so long had he been mishandled by Fortune, that, like a cur that has been accustomed to ill-treatment, he viewed her present bounty with suspicion. Had she poured for him the wine of comfort to dash the cup from his lips ere it was empty? That would be just like the jade. He scanned the sky anxiously for a sign of the coming storm, and, finding it cloudless, saw in this calm some new miracle of treachery, and feared the worst. He was afraid, selfishly, for Mr. Bumble's health. The man was pink and well-nourished. Anthony thought of apoplexy, and, had a medical book been available, would have sought a description of that malady's favourite prey. Mrs. Bumble was also well-covered. Anthony hoped that her heart was sound. On these two lives hung all his happiness. He reflected that motoring was not unattended by peril, and the idea stayed with him for half a day. Had he not been ashamed, he would have laid the facts before George and besought him to drive carefully. . . . .

As the days, however, went placidly by and brought no evil, the smoking flax of his faith began to kindle and his suspicions to wilt. His mind shook off its sickness and began to mend rapidly. Very soon it was as sound as a bell.

His temporary lapse from grace, just related, was so innocuous that it need not be counted to his discredit. His was the case of the pugilist who slipped on a piece of peel and felt unable to rise: had the place been a ring, instead of a pavement, he would have been up and dancing within ten seconds. So with Anthony—had Fortune frowned, he would have laughed in her face. It was her smile that made him cower. And, so long as she smiled, what mattered it if he cowered? Had Homer never nodded, gentlemen, till it was past his bed-time, neither you nor I would ever have heard of it.

If Betty had indeed affirmed that the

housework to be done at The Shrubbery was nothing, she was guilty of hyperbole. All the same, the house was an easy one, and such labour as its upkeep entailed melted, beneath the perfectly organised attention of herself, Anne, and Lyveden, as snow beneath the mid-day sun. The three had more legitimate leisure than any three servants in England, and no residence in Europe was better kept. Mr. and Mrs. Bumble, of course, were in clover. It followed that Anthony Lyveden had much time to himself. Naturally companionable, he spent most of this with his colleagues: nevertheless, there were days when he liked to change his clothes, call Patch, and walk off into the forest with only the little dog for company. It was then that he could think of my lady. . . .



"When her sister-in-law, similarly attired, followed her into the yard, Anthony felt as if he had been pushed on to a stage in the middle of a musical comedy."

He always associated her with the open

air. Never once did he picture her cribbed in a room. For him she was a creature of the countryside, sun-kissed, folded in the arms of the wind, with the pure red wine of Nature singing through her delicate veins.

Once she swayed towards him before the mirror of Imagination shivered, but only once. Mostly it flew to flinders almost before she was come.

Anthony hungered for a sight of the girl



. . . Thinking of veins, he recalled the faint exquisite blue of those which lay pencilled upon the back of her cold little hand. He remembered the line of them perfectly. . . .

The vein, then, gave him the hand: the hand, the arm: the arm, the shoulder. He reconstructed her piecemeal with a rare faithfulness, till by the time he was on the moorland overlooking the smiling valley, where the railroad went shining away into the old world, there stood his lady beside him, complete, glorious, the freshening breeze behind her moulding her soft raiment to the shape of her beautiful limbs, her eyes shining, her lips parted, one little hand touching her dark hair—just Valerie.

So for a brief second she stood by his side.

desperately. Had this been offered him upon the understanding that he appeared to her in livery, he would still have jumped at the chance. From this may be gauged the degree of his hunger. He was, in fact, starving.

Consequently, when one ripe September morning—all dew and mellow sunshine

and the lowing of cows—Betty tapped a letter with a significant forefinger and announced that it contained an invitation to a quiet little dance, Anthony, amid the general enthusiasm, displayed no more interest than politeness demanded and no curiosity at all.

Betty addressed herself to him.

"It's from Lady Touchstone. I was at school with her niece. They live at Bell Hammer, a beautiful place about five miles from here. You're included, of course. I saw her last week, so she knows all about you. It's because of her niece's birthday. Only about eight couples, she says, and no strangers."

"Except me," said Anthony.

"You won't feel strange long," said George. "Berry and Co. are sure to be there, for one thing, and they'll wrap their arms about you in about two minutes. They live at White Ladies. Some of them came to tea here the day you went over to Brooch."

"I don't think I'd better go," said Anthony. "It's very kind of Lady Touchstone, but I'm not much of a dancer, and——"

His protest was overruled uproariously.

"And he can't say he hasn't any clothes," said George, "because I've seen them."

This was true. Out of the spoliation of his wardrobe Lyveden had clung to a dress-suit, much as the orphan who lugs her carpet to the pawnshop clings pitifully to an old miniature, remembering happier days.

Anthony coloured at the allusion, and Betty came flying to his assistance.

"What a shame-!" she cried. "Why should he go if he doesn't want to? And, for all we know, none of us may be able to accept. We've got to get leave first, and then we've got to ask if we can have the Ford." She paused to glance at the time. "Ten to eight, and you haven't washed the yard yet. Don't sit there, George. Get a move on. You chauffeurs!" She fairly drove him about his business.

All the same, before the day was over, she had wheedled a promise from Anthony that, master and mistress permitting, he would go to the dance.

The Bumbles were duly approached, and consented readily to the projected exodus, asking solicitously if a quarter to ten would be early enough for the four to leave The Shrubbery, and offering the use of the Ford before this was sought. Considering that they were not upon the visiting list of Lady Touchstone, or, for that matter, upon that of any other of their domestics' friends, their readiness to facilitate the excursion must be accounted to them for righteousness of a calibre rare indeed.

The night of the dance came, and the stars with it. All the company of heaven twinkled and flashed out of a windless sky. No solitary breath of air rustled the silence of the woods. Summer was dying hard. Yet in the bottoms there lay—sure sign of Autumn—little hoary pools of mist, just deep enough to swathe the Ford and its complement of would-be revellers in a wet rush of frozen smoke, and make the girls thrust their pink fingers beneath the rug, and Anthony his hands into his coat-pockets.

For all that, for Lyveden the five miles to Bell Hammer were covered too soon. He liked to feel the rush of the wings of Night upon his temples, to mark the untroubled slumber of the countryside, gaze at the velvet dome fretted with silver. Moreover, he was almost dreading the dance. Had he not given his word a week ago, he would—speaking vulgarly—have stuck his toes in and seen his companions to the edge of the pit before he followed them into the mansion.

For a mansion it was.

Though the night was moonless, Anthony could see that. That it was a beautiful specimen of a "Queen Anne" residence he could not perceive. Indeed, almost before the car had been berthed close to the shadowy elegance of a tremendous cedar, the front door was opened, and a great shaft of light streamed out into the darkness.

The guests passed in.

The monstrous deference of the footman who received Anthony's coat and hat gave a disconcerting fillip to the latter's uneasiness. As a respectful butler preceded the party upstairs, he felt as if he were being conducted to a scaffold.

"Captain and Mrs. Alison, Miss Alison, Major Lyveden."

Anthony braced himself.

The next moment—

"How d'ye do?" said Valerie, with a quiet smile. "I'm so glad you could come. How's Patch?"

With a whirling brain, Anthony tried to say that Patch was very well.

"Let me introduce you to my aunt," said Valerie, turning to a lady whom Anthony seemed to have seen before. "Aunt Harriet, this is Major Lyveden—Lady Touchstone."

Anthony bowed dazedly.

"You were very good to Valerie," said the lady, "a little while ago. I've heard about it. And how do you like service? I always said that, if my father had put his money into railways instead of ships, I should have become a cook-housekeeper."

"It all depends," said Anthony, "on whose service you're in. I like yours very much."

Lady Touchstone laughed.

"You'd make a good equerry," she said. Then she turned to glance down the gallery. "You must meet Mrs. Pleydell," she added. "Ah, there she is. Come." They stepped to the side of a tall dark girl with a most attractive smile. "Daphne, my dear, this is Major Lyveden—from The Shrubbery. Amuse him, and he'll flatter you. You see." The tall fair man who had been sitting with Mrs. Pleydell offered Lady Touchstone his arm. She put it aside with a frown. "I'm not so old as all that, Jonah," she said. "You may take me to the hearth, if you please, but not like a grandmother."

With a crash an alcove belched music, and in a moment all the winking length of the gallery was throbbing with ragtime.

Mrs. Pleydell and Anthony trod the measure with a will.

When it was over, she led him to a tall window with a deep-cushioned seat.

"You were out," she said, "when I came the other day. To make up for it, you must come to White Ladies. It's a pretty walk, and we'll take you back in the car."

"You're very kind," said Anthony.

"If you talk like that," said Daphne, "I shall invite you for the week-end. And now would you like to talk shop, or shall I tell you about my new dress?"

Anthony hesitated, and the girl laughed merrily.

"I'm a past-mistress of blackmail," she said. "My husband taught me."

Anthony joined in her merriment before clearing his throat.

"My first place," he said, "was in Lancaster Gate."

"I know," said Daphne eagerly. "North of the Park. Go on."

Before they parted, they had danced two more dances together.

Then he spent a quarter of an hour with Betty and another like period with Anne. After that, before he could get to Valerie, he was handed to a little fair damsel, all big grey eyes and masses of golden hair.

"Major Lyveden—Miss Mansel."

"Isn't Daphne nice?" said that lady. "I saw you dancing with her. She's my cousin."

"I envy you both," said Anthony.

Jill Mansel stared at him gravely.

"That's very nice of you. Yes, I'd love to dance this. Look. There's Adèle. Isn't she lovely? I think she's like a flower. She's going to marry my cousin. She's an American without an accent. You are tall, aren't you? You're all tall here to-night, except me. It makes me feel a dwarf."

"And us, ogres," said Anthony.

Jill laughed delightedly.

"You are nice," she said. "Valerie said you were. Look at Berry dancing with Daphne, and pretending he's bored stiff. When are you coming to White Ladies?"

She prattled on contentedly, asking questions innumerable, but requiring no answers.

Lyveden enjoyed himself.

After they had sat out a little, Valerie came towards them with the man called Jonah.

"Since you won't ask me," she said to Anthony, "I must throw myself at your head." She turned smiling to Jill. "Jonah is bored with me, dear, so I'm going to heap coals of fire on his head and restore him to his little sister." She returned to Anthony. "Now, then." Thus addressed, he offered her his arm soberly enough. "There's some supper, I know, downstairs, because I ordered it myself."

They made for the great doors, Anthony tongue-tied, and she hailing others to follow them.

As they passed down the broad staircase, he remembered the reason of the party, and begged to congratulate her. My lady thanked him with a quiet smile.

"We've got a lot to talk about," she said. "You and I. And there'll be too much noise at supper, so it must wait. Afterwards I'll send for a coat, and we'll walk in the garden. That's the best of a birthday. I can do as I please."

Her promise of his peaceful possession after supper made the meal, so far as Lyveden was concerned, an Olympian banquet. The assemblage, indeed, was remarkable, and the hostess—a very Demeter—must have been the oldest present by some twenty years. The sprightliness of Hermes alone, in the guise of the man called Berry, kept a lively table in roars of laughter. Yet, full as his cup was, for Anthony the old Falernian was to come. . .

As good as her word, when the others were straying back to the gallery in response to the lure of a lullaby valse, Valerie led Lyveden to a lobby and let him help her into a chamois-leather coat. A cloak of Irish frieze was hanging there, and she bade him put it about his shoulders against the night air. Anthony protested, but she just stamped her foot.

"It's my birthday," she flashed.

Anthony donned the garment, and she opened a garden-door. A moment later they were walking upon a wide terrace at the back of the house.

"Well?" said Valerie.

"It is my bounden duty," said Anthony, "to remind you that I am a footman. Now that you know, it's very easy to tell you."

"And what if you are?"

"Well, if we happened to visit the same house, I should go in by the tradesmen's entrance."

Valerie tossed her head.

"You might go in by the back, but if you weren't shown out of the front door, *I* shouldn't visit that house again."

Anthony sighed.

"Then your visiting-list would shrink," he said, "out of all knowledge. How did you know my calling?"

"Did you think I didn't recognise you that night?"

"At first I was uncertain. Then I thought you must have. Then you misled me, and made me think you hadn't. Why did you do that?"

"I don't know," said Valerie. She could not tell him the truth. "It seemed easier. How did you come to The Shubbery?"

"I wasn't happy where I was, and I saw the Bumbles' advertisement. It seemed meant for me."

That it was meant for him, and that she, and not the Bumbles, had paid for its insertion, Valerie thought it unnecessary to state.

"We're fated to be brought together," she said.

"How did you know I was at The Shrubbery?"

Valerie raised her eyebrows.

"Betty's my oldest friend," she replied.

Lyveden swallowed the *suggestio falsi* without a thought. Indeed, so soon as she had spoken, his mind sped back, bee-like, to suck the honey of her previous words: "We're fated to be brought together." Fated . . .

The moon was up now, and he lifted up his eyes and gazed at its clear-cut beauty. A power, then, greater than he had ruled against his resolve. Why? To what end? It was very kind of the power—at least, he supposed it was—but what was to become of it?

He had wandered straight into her arms. Very good. But—he and she could not stroll upon this terrace for ever. The relentless rubric of Life insisted that he must move—whither he chose, of course, but somewhither. The truth was, he did not know which way to turn. His heart pointed a path, certainly—a very precious path, paved all with silk, hung with the scent of flowers, shadowed by whispering plumage . . . His head, however, beyond denouncing his heart as a guide, pointed no way at all.

Anthony wanted desperately to do the right thing. Fortune, it seemed, was at her old tricks. Here she was handing a palace to a beggar who had not enough money to maintain a hovel. It would not have been so hopeless if he had possessed "prospects." With these in his pack, he would have essayed the way his heart showed him. They were, however, no part of a footman's equipment . . .

Anthony began to wonder what became of old footmen. One or two, perhaps, became butlers. As for the rest . . .

Valerie, too, was in some perplexity. She was wondering, now that she had her man here, how best to deal with him. Pride and honour make up a ground which must be trodden delicately. One false step on her part might cost them both extremely dear. Her instinct was to take the bull by the horns, Anthony by the arm, and Time by the forelock. The last of these was slipping away—slipping away. She was actually twenty-six. In a short fourteen years she would be actually forty. Forty! For a moment she was upon the very edge of exercising the privilege of a sovereign lady who has fallen in love. All things considered, she would, I think, have been justified. Something, however, restrained her. It was not modesty, for modesty had nothing to do with the matter. It was not the fear of rejection, for she was sure of her ground. It was probably a threefold influence—a rope, as it were, of three stout strands. The first was consideration for Anthony's pride: the second, an anxiety lest she should beggar him of that which he prized above rubies, namely, his self-respect: the third, an innate conviction that while the path of

Love may look easy, it is really slippery and steep out of all conscience.

Thus absorbed in the delicacy of their relationship, they stepped the length of the terrace in silence. Then—

"I don't know what you're thinking about," said Valerie," but I should like to."

Anthony shook his head.

"I'll tell you a story instead," he said. "If you like, that is."

"Please."

She turned and leaned her arms upon the stone balustrade, overlooking dim lawns and, beyond, the pale ghost of a great park that seemed to stretch and roll unlimited into the depths of a distance which Night had bewitched.

"There was once," said Anthony, "a frog. He wasn't much of a frog, as frogs go. In fact, with the exception that he had no home and no friends, he was a very ordinary frog indeed. One day, when he was sick and tired of being alone, he went out and bought a tame minnow. Considering how poor he was, it was very reckless, because it meant that there were now two mouths to feed instead of one; but the minnow and the frog became such great friends that that didn't seem to matter. At last, sure enough, the day of reckoning arrived. The larder was empty, the minnow's appetite was as healthy as ever, and the frog was down to his last penny. So, after a lot of thought, he left the minnow playing in a quiet pool, and went out to earn some flies. By dint of toiling very hard all day, he managed to earn enough to keep the minnow and himself, but it meant that the two had very little time together, and that was a shame.

"Well, one day the frog got back to the pool a little earlier than usual, and, chancing to lift up his eyes, there seated upon the bank he saw a real live Princess. What the frog thought, when he saw her, may be imagined. What he felt doesn't matter. Enough that he was profoundly moved. So moved that he almost forgot to give the minnow his flies. And long after the Princess had risen and gone away, the frog kept thinking of her, and thinking, and thinking . . . And then, all of a sudden, he began to wish, as he had never wished before, that he wasn't a frog.

"Now, vain desires are the most persistent of all.

"The frog wished and wished, and cursed himself for a fool, and wished again . . . At last he could bear it no longer, so he went to a water-rat who was so old that he was said to be wise, and sought his advice.

"The water-rat was painfully outspoken.

"'Once a frog, always a frog,' he said.

"'Always?'

"'Always. Unless you can find a Princess and persuade her to kiss you.' And, being an old rat, he chuckled at his own joke.

"But the frog didn't see anything to laugh at. He just became so excited that he could hardly float, and then he turned round and started to swim back to the pool as hard as ever he could . . .

"By the next morning his excitement had somewhat abated. Of course he was tremendously lucky to have found a Princess. (Being an optimist, you see, he assumed that she would reappear.) But it was quite another matter to persuade her to kiss him. Still, he didn't give up hope, and every day he raced and tore after the flies, so as to get back early to the pool.

"Then one day the impossible thing happened.

"There was the Princess again on the bank of the pool, and when the frog put up his nose and fixed her with a bulging and glassy eye, she smiled at him. Very haltingly the frog swam to land and crouched at her feet, and, before he knew where he was, she had stooped and kissed him.

"The frog just shut his eyes in ecstasy and gloated upon the fulfilment of his desire. It had happened. His wish had been gratified. The change had come. He was no longer a frog. For the first time he began to wonder what he was. Probably a Prince. Oh, undoubtedly a Prince. All clad in gold and silver, with a little fair moustache. He hoped very much that he had a fair moustache. But he wouldn't put up his hand and feel, for fear of spoiling it. He wanted to look at himself gradually, beginning with his feet and working upwards. He began to wonder what sort of boots he had on. He decided that he was wearing soft gold boots, with silver laces . . .

"Cautiously he opened one eye and glanced at his right foot. He was quite wrong. It wasn't a gold boot at all. It was a queer-looking boot, all smooth and shiny and shaped—well, rather like—like a frog's foot. In fact, if he hadn't known that he was no longer a frog, he would have said . . . A frightful thought came to him, and he opened both eyes, staring frantically . . . Then he sprang to the edge of the pool and

looked himself in the face . . . He stood gazing so long that the minnow, who had been watching him, thought he was ill, and leaped out of the water to attract his attention. At last the frog pulled himself together and flopped back into the pool anyhow . . .

"And, after many days, during all of which the minnow was a great comfort, he came to realise that frogs should know better than to lift up their eyes, and should busy themselves with fly-earning, and be thankful for the air and the sun and the mud at the bottom of pools, and, last of all, look forward to that sun-bathed marsh where the flies are fat and plenteous, and there is no winter, and whither, at the end of their lives, all good frogs go."

There was a long silence. Then—

"Poor frog," said Valerie, standing upright and turning.

"It's very nice of you to say so," said Anthony, falling into step. "But he richly deserved it."

"And what happened to the Princess?"

"Oh, she went the way Princesses go, and enriched the memories of all who saw her, and in due season she married a Prince."

"Didn't she ever think any more of the frog?"

"No," said Anthony.

"Then why did she kiss him?"

They had come to the garden door by now, and, as she spoke, Valerie set a hand on the latch.

"Out of pity," said Anthony. "She had a sweet, kind heart, and she was sorry for him because he was a frog."

"I don't believe it was out of pity at all," said Valerie. "I'm—I'm sure it wasn't."

"It must have been," said Anthony. "Why on earth else should a Princess——"

"Because it pleased her to kiss him," said Valerie, with the air of a queen.

Anthony looked at her with undisguised admiration.

"You're a real Princess," he said, "any way."

Valerie let go the door-handle and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Why did she kiss him?" she demanded.

"Out of—because it pleased her."

The hand touched his cheek, and Anthony caught it and put it to his lips. As he let it go, the slight fingers caught his and, before he could stop her, Valerie had stooped and kissed them.

The next instant the door was open, and she was inside.

* * * * *

Mr. Albert Morgan was working feverishly. Time was getting on, and the plate-chest had proved unexpectedly stubborn. To know where it was had been a great help, of course, but during his service at The Shubbery it had been kept unlocked. Somewhat unfairly, he cursed the parlourmaid, who, he assumed, was doing his work.

Curiously enough, he had no idea that his late colleagues were not in the house. He believed them to be sleeping peacefully in the servants' quarters. For considerately placing the pantry distant from these, it might have been thought that the architect of the house would receive Mr. Morgan's commendation. On the contrary, of his zeal appropriately to execrate the former's memory, the ex-footman employed most regrettable language, and this for the simple reason that the stone sill of the pantry window projected rather further from the wall than Mr. Morgan, when in the act of lifting his knee, had believed to be the case.

With the exception of this painful incident, his ingress had been effected with the acme of ease. This was due to the foresight, patience, and unremitting care with which he had severed the bars and removed the spring of the window-catch during his last fortnight in Mr. Bumble's employ.

After the refractory plate-chest had been made to disgorge, Mr. Morgan had visited the drawing-room. By the time he had garnered what precious metal was there, his two capacious bags had become extremely heavy. So much so, that he almost regretted that he had not brought a friend. The reflection, however, that to present a coadjutor with half the proceeds of a robbery which his brain alone had conceived and made possible, would undoubtedly have shortened his life, made him feel better. Cautiously he made for the stairs and, guiding himself with his torch, began to ascend.

There were some snuff-boxes in a cabinet which stood on the landing. It was unthinkable that he should go without these. The piece was kept locked, but he had often gazed at them through the glass. One of them was of silver-gilt—possibly of gold. Mr. Morgan licked his thick lips.

It was upon the door of this cabinet, then, that, torch in mouth, he was working feverishly. Time was getting on . . .

As if in answer to the subdued crack with which the door at length yielded, came the noise of the insertion of a key into the lock of the front door. Mr. Morgan started violently, thrust his torch into a pocket, and stood extremely still.

The door opened, and the admitted moonlight showed him the entrance of one—two feminine apparitions, followed by that of a man. For a moment they stood in the hall, speaking with one another in an undertone. What they said Mr. Morgan could not hear—their voices, too, were too low to be recognised—but he had no doubt at all regarding their identity. Seven weeks of their fellowship had blessed (or cursed) him with a familiarity with their style and proportions such as no manner of wraps and tricksy half-lights could subvert. With a full heart and twitching lips, Mr. Morgan dwelt blasphemously upon the several destinies for which, to his mind, their untimely appearance had qualified them.

"What are you going to do about the door?" whispered Betty. "We can't leave it open."

"Well, we can't shut it," said George, "can we?"

"Put it to," Anne suggested. "He won't be more than a minute or two, and when he comes he can just push it open."

The truth of the matter was that José and Patch, who had gone a-hunting, had not returned when the party had left for Bell Hammer. It was possible that, during their absence, the dogs had come back, and Anthony did not like to think that truant Patch might be wandering around the house, seeking admission in vain. Consequently, after the car had been noiselessly bestowed—out of consideration for their employers' rest, the four had alighted before they left the road and had manhandled a silent Ford up the drive and into the garage—Lyveden had bidden the others go on, and had started off upon a visiting patrol, the objectives of which were the several entrances to the residence. If Patch was anywhere, he would be crouched upon one of the doorsteps. . . .

Anne's suggestion seeming reasonable, her brother secured the Yale lock so that its tongue was engaged, and, quietly closing the door, followed his wife and sister a-tiptoe through the hall and past the baize door which led to the servants' quarters.

As they passed the foot of the stairs, Betty remarked the shaft of moonlight shining upon the landing, and Mr. Morgan's black heart stood still. When her husband reminded her that in less than four hours it would be her privilege to prepare Mrs. Bumble's tea, and added that, if she felt lyrical, he felt tired and footsore, Mr. Morgan, had his emotions included gratitude, would have thanked his stars.

Such devotion, however, would have been premature.

Though he did not know it, his stars in their courses were fighting against him.

The moment the baize door had closed behind his late colleagues, he made silently for the stairs. Of the snuff-boxes he thought no more. The man was rattled. His one idea was to pick up his traps and be gone. He was even afraid any more to employ his torch. Besides, the moonlight, to which Betty had drawn his attention, was asserting itself fantastically.

Step by step he descended the staircase, trying frantically to remember which of the treads would creak under his weight. Faithfully to ascertain which of them possessed this important peculiarity had been one of the last things he did before quitting Mr. Bumble's service. Was it the fifth or sixth? He hesitated, then avoided the fifth gingerly, and hoped for the best. . . . Beneath the increased pressure the sixth stair fairly shrieked. Mr. Morgan skipped on to the seventh and broke into a cold sweat. Again he was confronted with the choice of the eighth or ninth. After a moment of agonised indecision, he decided to miss them both. . . Man but proposes. In his anxiety he missed the tenth also and slithered incontinently into the hall. . . .

More than a minute passed before the knave dared to pick himself up. The last five stairs had been rough with his hinder parts, but his physical pain was nothing to the paroxysm of mental torment which the noise of his fall had induced.

Trembling with apprehension, he groped his way to his bags. Of these, one had to be strapped, for the catch of its lock was broken. He knelt down with his back to the door, fumbling . .

A sudden step upon the gravel immediately outside the front door almost congealed his blood. That peril could blow from that quarter he had never imagined. Once again he remained where he was, as still as death. Unless the newcomer was there because his suspicions were aroused, there was a chance that Mr. Morgan might yet escape notice. Who the newcomer might

be, he had no time to speculate, for, without being unlocked, the door was pushed open. Mr. Morgan marked the phenomenon, and his hair rose. Then a man stepped inside and stood still . . .

Mr. Morgan held his breath until his lungs were bursting and his head swam, but the man never moved.

The fact was that Anthony was staring at the same shaft of light which had attracted Betty's attention. This, however, was no longer appearing upon the landing, but in the hall, which, with the exception of that corner which contained the crouching ex-footman, it was doing much to illuminate. From this it would appear that the arresting beam, so far from emanating from the moon, was none other than Mr. Morgan's evil genius, following him about wherever he went. It was, in fact, his torch, which in his confusion he had thrust glowing into his pocket *the wrong way up*. That one end must protrude, he knew, for the brand was longer than the pocket was deep. He had, of course, no idea at all that it was advertising his presence and slightest movement so very faithfully . . .

It became impossible for Mr. Morgan any longer to restrain his breath. He therefore expelled it as gently as he possibly could, inhaling a fresh supply with the same caution, and wondering dully whether it was to be his last. The suspense was unbearable. . . .

Anthony, of course, was perfectly satisfied that the light was thrown by a torch. The source of the latter, however, was shrouded, not only in mystery, but in a darkness which the very light of the beam served to intensify. He continued to stand still.

There never was such a case.

Anthony, who knew the value of waiting, was prepared to stay still indefinitely. Mr. Morgan was afraid to do anything else. Clearly, if they were not to remain where they were until dawn, there was need of a *deus ex machina*.

He arrived then and there in the shape of a little white dog with a black patch. He was extremely wet, and there were burrs in his coat and mud upon his beard. His tail was up, however, and his gait as sprightly as ever.

As if it was upon his account that the door had been set open at this unlawful hour, he entered boldly, passed by Anthony in the gloom, and then stood still like his master, staring at the mysterious beam. But not for long. For Patch, curiosity was made to be satisfied. Stepping warily, he moved forward to investigate . . .

When first Mr. Morgan realised that something was smelling him from behind, he made ready to die. Then, so tenacious is the hold we mortals have upon life, he gave an unearthly shriek and sprang from his bended knees for the drawing-room doorway . . .

When Mr. Bumble and his chauffeur, the one in his night attire and the other in a vest and a pair of dress trousers, appeared upon the scene, Anthony was kneeling upon Mr. Morgan, who was lying face downwards upon the drawing-room hearth and dealing as fluently as a sheepskin rug would permit with Anthony's birth, life, death and future existence. As for Patch, his services no longer required, he was rolling upon the sofa in an absurd endeavour to remove the burrs from his coat.

All of which, gentlemen, must undeniably go to show that the master who suffers his servants to go a-junketing will have his reward; that a woman knows better than a man what course he should shape; and that there is much virtue in hunting, even though it keep the hunter afoot till four of the morning.

The fourth story in this series will appear in the next number.

FISHERMEN'S FACTS

SOME CURIOUS METHODS IN THE FISHING CUSTOMS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

By H. T. SHERINGHAM

Photographs by Underwood & Underwood

TO the question "How old is the art of fishing?" one of the most noted students of fish lore significantly replied, "Probably as old as hunger." And to such a question as "How many kinds of fishing are there?" it would be necessary to give a reply of similarly unaided hands to the employment of laboratory magic—it is Alpha to Omega. And as all the other letters of the alphabet are in constant use, so are all the ways of catching fish which lie between the two extremes.

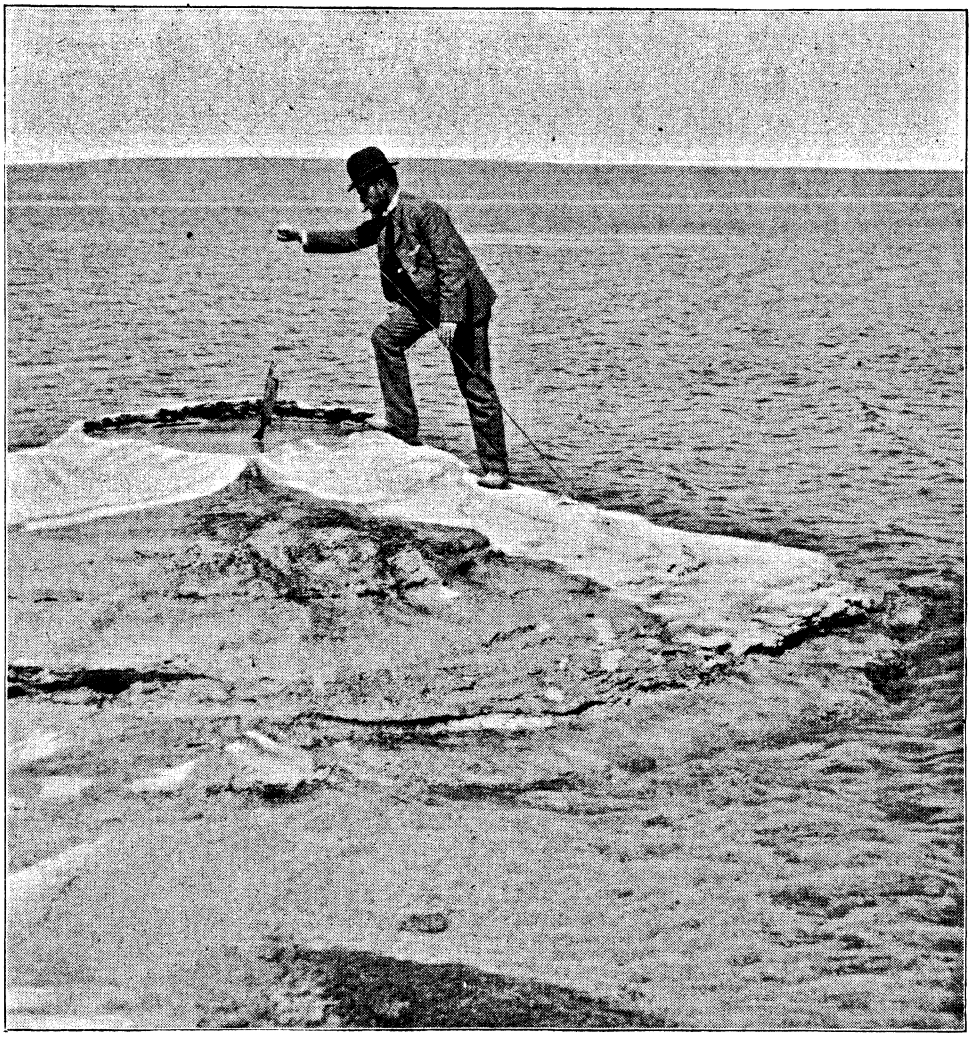
Very curious some of these ways are, and



HAULING SALMON OUT OF COLUMBIA RIVER, OREGON.

sweeping nature. For man, in his attempt to appease that hunger which came with him into the world, has brought all his inventive powers to bear on the problem of ensnaring the wandering tribes which inhabit waters both fresh and salt. And it is an interesting thought that every single method of fish-catching which has ever been devised, from the most primitive to the most advanced, is probably practised somewhere in the wide world to-day. Indeed, we need not go far afield for an illustration of this. I will go bail for the fact that in this England of ours, in this past summer of 1920, more than one country lad has "tickled" a trout, while more than one more scientific practitioner of poaching nets has acquired a salmon by the use of high explosives. From the capture of fish by the very varied the attitude of fishermen in different lands towards their business. And yet there is a family likeness in all fishermen, and even the unfamiliar, displayed so well in the striking photographs which accompany this random meditation, can usually be paralleled by some practice in our own country. Take, to begin with, the biggest of all fishing—the harpooning of monsters of the whale family (the porpoise, like the rest of them, is not a fish, but a mammal, though its habits are fish-like), it is merely an adaptation of fish-spearing, which probably began in fresh water on a much smaller scale. Who does not remember Jan Ridd and the loaches which he speared in Badgworthy water, an offering to be laid presently at the pretty feet of little Lorna Doone? It is quite possible that

Blackmore was describing the most primitive form of fish-spearing in that chapter. A more famous branch of the art has been immortalised by Sir Walter Scott, the "manly sport," as he calls it, of "leistering" for salmon. It is not looked upon with favouring eyes nowadays, but it sure whether anybody fishes for porpoises yet, but swordfish, sharks, tuna, tarpon, and other huge fish have all been included in the angler's list of opponents in the last twenty or thirty years. The biggest so far caught on rod and line is, I believe, a tuna of 710lb. from the St. Ann's Bay district in

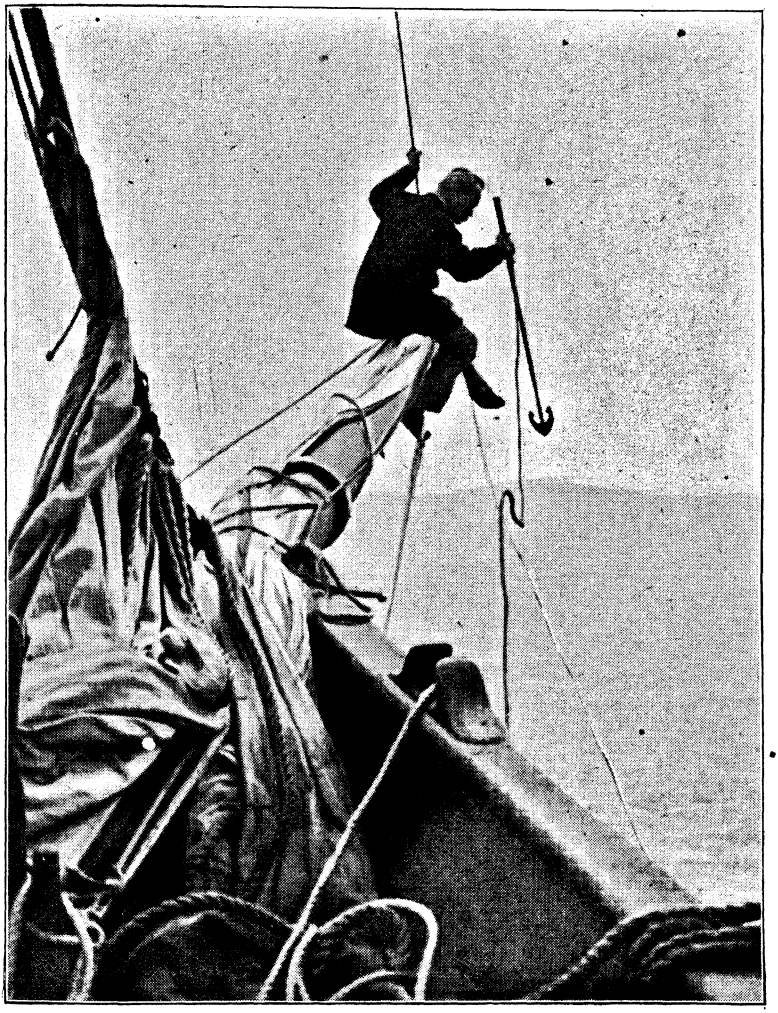


A FISHERMAN LOWERING A FISH INTO A HOT SPRING TO BOIL.

He caught it from the lava island, and is transferring it from the lake to the boiling water in the geyser basin in Yellowstone National Park.

no doubt survives in places among other poaching devices. Anyhow, eel-spearing is a well-accredited practice in some parts of the country, and that is much the same thing. The harpoon is giving place to the rod and line nowadays, not only on salmon rivers, but also among the sea monsters. I am not Canada. There is no reason, except the limitations of human powers of endurance, why bigger fish still should not be caught by anglers. The tunny of the Mediterranean (the same fish as tuna) run up to something like two thousand pounds in weight, and they could, no doubt, be at any rate

hooked. These fish have induced the establishment in Sicily of what is probably the most remarkable fishing apparatus in the world—a vast decoy made of nets, through which the shoals find their way by chamber after chamber into an inmost enclosure, called the *camera di morte*, where thev are killed by bludgeons or harpoons.



THE FAMOUS DR. WILFRED T. GRENFELL, FOR MANY YEARS ALL-ROUND GOOD ANGEL TO THE FISHER-FOLK OF LABRADOR, HARPOONING PORPOISE FROM THE BOWSPRIT OF A LABRADOR FISHING VESSEL.

This kind of fishing is exciting sport, because porpoise can travel with the speed of a railroad train, and are hard to hit with a harpoon. Dr. Grenfell, while improving living conditions among the Labradorians, has done much to develop the fishing industry in that icy region, where the people live by fishing almost exclusively.

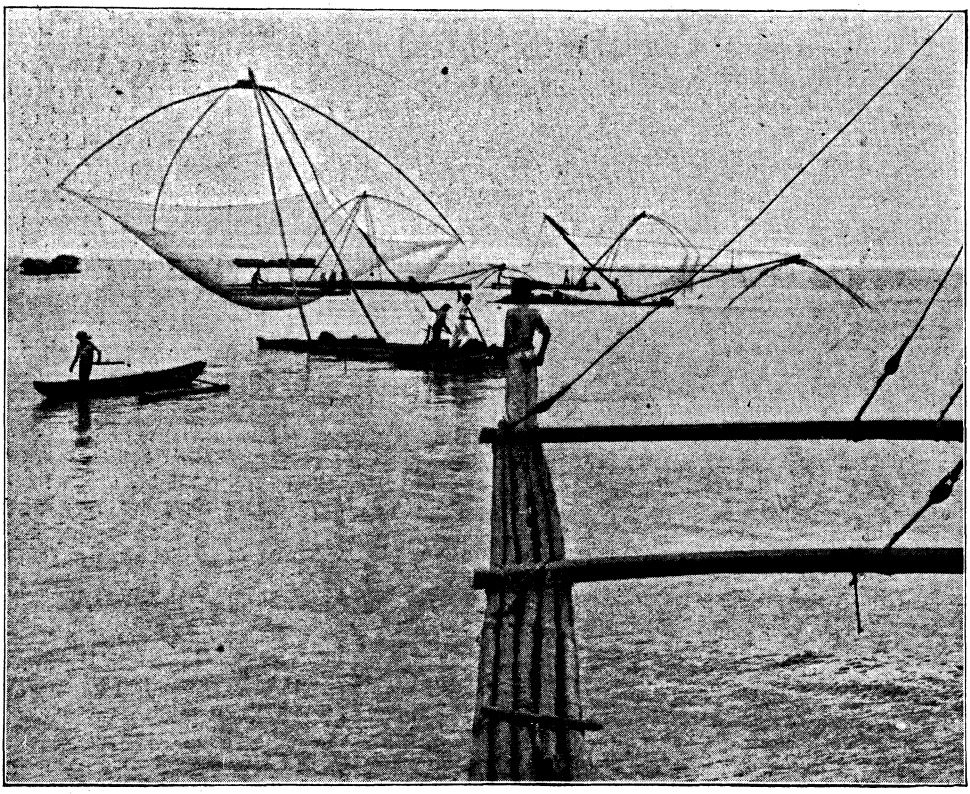
A vivid description of the proceeding is to be found in that curious old book "Fish Tattle," by the Rev. C. D. Badham. I fear that England can provide no parallel to the remarkable hot-spring facilities of Yellowstone Park, where a man, as the picture shows, can catch a fish from one pond and cook it in another without moving a yard. But the Empire could probably match this marvel, for the hot-lakes district of New Zealand provides very similar conditions. Near the famous township of Rotorua there are, as Captain Hamilton has recorded, "places where the angler might catch a trout and boil it in a spring within a yard of the margin of the river and of the spot where it was landed." Both in the United States and in New Zealand the volcanic country seems to be favourable to the production of good trout; probably the waters are very rich in food. Fish are fond of a current of warm water. I can remember, as a boy, often fishing at a place where such a current came from the waste pipe of a mill. We used to consider it a very favourable spot for big roach.

The evolution of the science of netting and nets would justify several volumes, for it is a big and complicated subject. There are nets which you let straight down into the water and draw up again, nets which you draw behind boats, nets with which you enclose a portion of sea or river, and with it any fish which it contains. The first kind is probably the oldest, since it is the simplest to make and the easiest to use. It has been developed

into quite a formidable engine in some parts of the world, as the photographs of dip-nets at work in the Philippine Islands and in Japan show. The Japanese in some cases use such a net from a high platform which serves both as an observation tower and as a convenient stage for operating the net. The uninitiated might imagine that fish in clear water would avoid so obviously dangerous a locality as that where a dip-net is sunk, but fish have little or no prescience. On a small scale anyone

office of a sort of lucky bag. You paid your franc, had your dip, and were entitled to whatever haul of fish was the result.

The high platform of the Japanese is employed in other countries, too, sometimes for practical reasons in connection with the net, as in the case of the Norwegian fishing station shown, where the tide rises to a great height, and sometimes as a look-out post for detecting the advent of shoals of fish, which often display themselves by jumping out of the water for fun or in pursuit of small



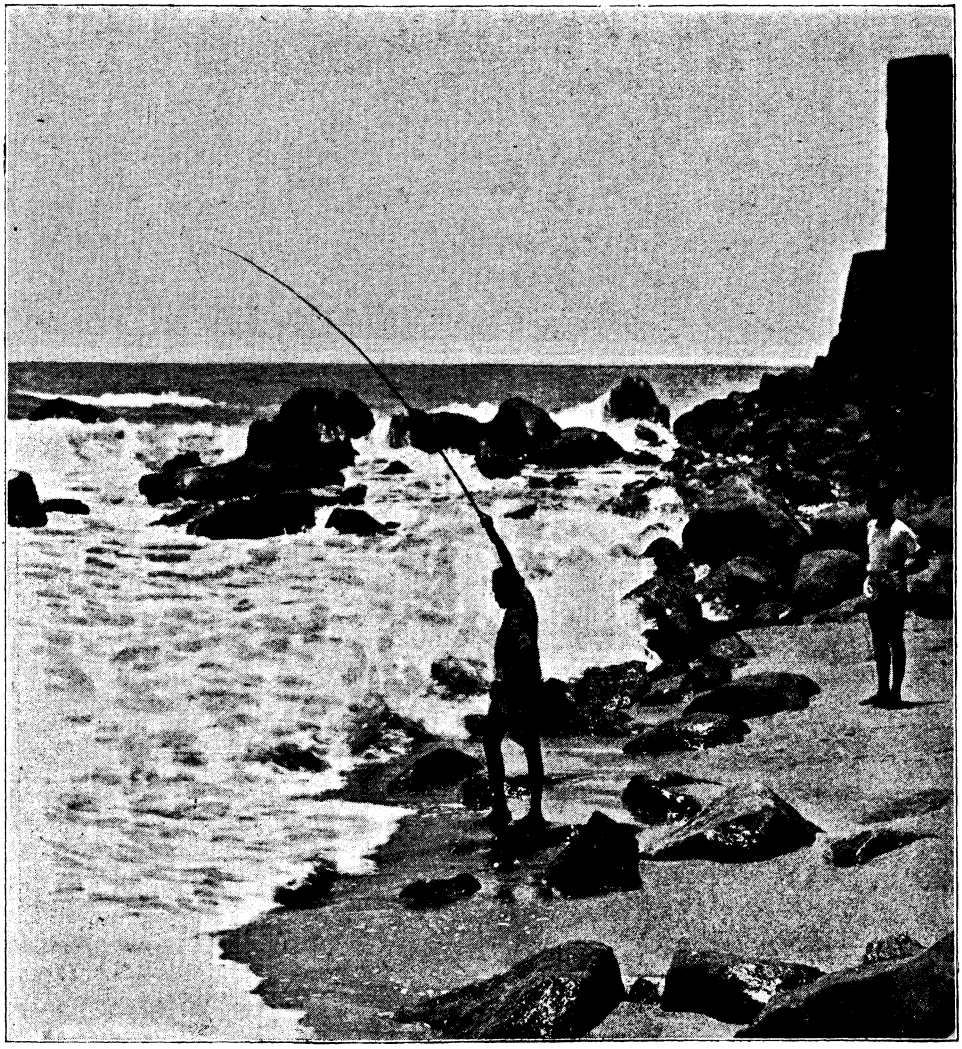
FISHING WITH BIG DIP-NETS OFF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

may test the matter for himself in our own rivers by using one of those small round nets which are known as "minnow wonders," and are just little dip-nets. Small fish of several species may be readily caught thus, the more readily if, after the net has been let down, a little food is thrown in to attract them. Nor, as Walton said of the perch, are they afraid "though their fellows and companions perish in their sight." Small or great, dip-nets are used in many parts of the world. There is, or was, one on Calais pier which performed the fry. The shoals detected, the fisherman knows that he must make ready.

One of the most interesting forms of netting is certainly the use of the seine, which is very commonly employed for salmon. It is paid out in a circle from a boat and then hauled steadily ashore, sometimes with the help of horses, as on the Columbia River, in the scene shown. The salmon caught there, by the way, are not the same as ours, though they are very much like them and hardly inferior in quality. The Pacific salmon, as they are called, embrace

five different species, of which the chinook or king salmon is the biggest, running not infrequently to a weight of 60lb. or more. *Salmo salar*, the Atlantic salmon, does not often weigh so much as that. These Pacific salmon have a life-history which is in itself one of the marvels of fish life. They spawn in the upper reaches of the big rivers of the Pacific slope of North America, and some of them travel many hundreds of miles to get to their breeding-grounds. Hardly any survive the toilsome journey and the fatigues of spawning, and the continuity of the species devolves on the tiny fry which have to make their way down to the sea when but a few inches long, and grow there among incalculable dangers. Truly the ways of Nature are wonderful.

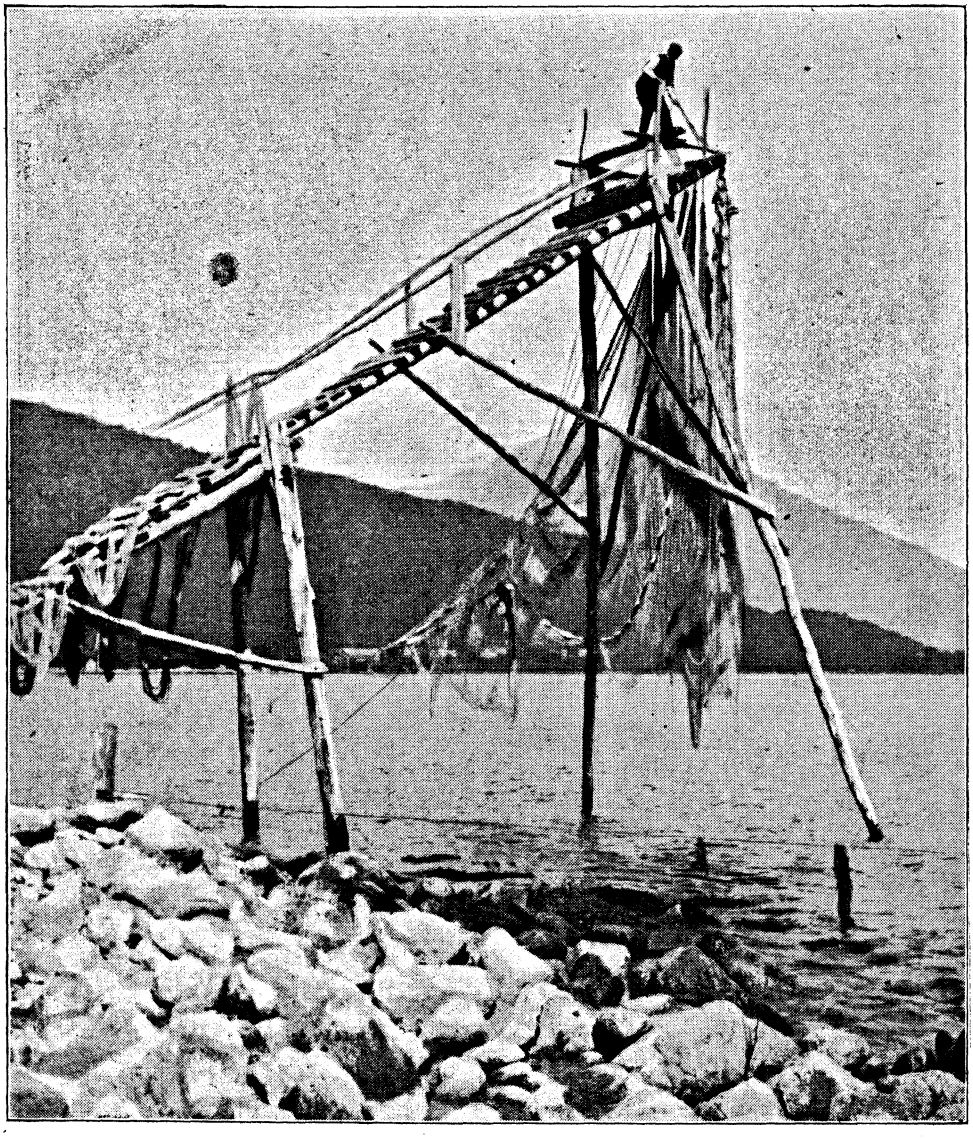
Of methods of taking fish by rod and line the list is, of course, a long one, and the need for them all is shown by the infinite variety of waters in which people practise their wiles. Most esteemed nowadays, perhaps, is the use of artificial flies, a dainty art in which women delight almost as much as men now, and in which they display no less skill. Fly-fishing can be what you choose to make it—a gentle, meditative relaxation, or downright hard and quite dangerous work. It appeals, therefore, to



FISHING WITH ROD AND LINE IN THE ROCK-CHURNED SURF ON THE COAST OF CEYLON.

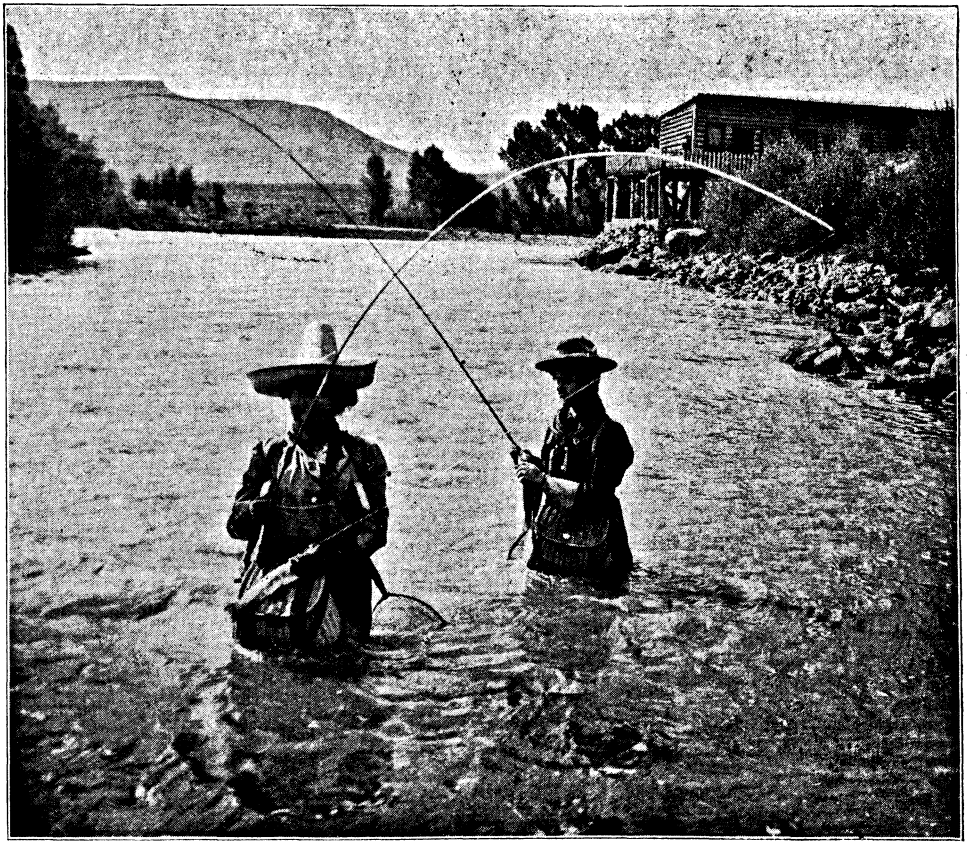
various temperaments. So, too, with other kinds of rod fishing, whether it be practised in the surf of Ceylon or Devonshire, in the roaring torrents of Canada, Norway, or the Highlands, in the newly-stocked trout streams of Kashmir, or on some placid Midland canal. Methods of angling are pretty well as numerous as species of fish and types of water, for each demands some special procedure or tackle.

It is not possible to cover the whole field of fishing curiosities in a brief article, so I can no more than touch on a few of what may be called the minor oddities. Animals have played a part in man's fishing operations ere now, and not only tame otters, to which the business would be natural, but also dogs and even cats. Fishing dogs have been not uncommon, and sometimes they have been skilled enough to be useful as



A NORWEGIAN FISHERMAN LOWERING HIS NET FROM A SCAFFOLD USED BECAUSE OF THE HIGH TIDE.
The tide here is about fifteen feet, and the nets are set when the tide is low. The fisherman uses a boat to go to his net when the tide is high. This photograph was taken at Dalestrand, on the Sognefjord, North Cape region.

food-producers. That well-known angler Sir Thomas Wardle had a retriever which would land a hooked trout for him without endangering the fine tackle, and a good many similar instances are on record. Cats, despite their love of fish, are less easily persuaded to turn angler, owing to their antipathy to getting wet, but I have known more than one cat which would cleverly catch small trout and other fish from shallow streams. Larger animals have also been employed in fishing, even elephants, which have been used to stir up the mud in Indian "tanks," so driving the half-suffocated fish to the surface, where they could easily be caught. Perhaps the oddest use of animals in fishing of which I have found a record is described in Humboldt's "Aspects of Nature." He relates how in South America the Indians would capture the formidable electric eels (*Gymnotus*) by driving mules and horses into the lagoons where the creatures live, and making them exhaust the galvanic force by being attacked. After a time the eels expended most of their strength on the half-maddened animals, and could then be captured and drawn ashore. Birds also play their part in the business. The cormorant is used by fishermen in the Far East to catch fish for them. A ring on its neck prevents it from swallowing what it catches. Possibly the osprey might be trained to a like service. The osprey, however, seems sometimes to overestimate its powers and to seize fish which it cannot lift. Various witnesses have testified to finding on some big Scandinavian lake the skeleton of one of these birds attached to the skeleton of a great pike, or even to the body of a live one. The bird had pounced on the fish as it basked on the surface, and, unable either to lift it or to disengage its talons, had in due course been drowned. The vision of such a ghastly object as the skeleton moving about the waters must have terrified many a lonely fisherman, and has probably given rise to some of the water "troll" stories of the North.



WOMEN TROUT-FISHING IN GUNNISON RIVER, COLORADO.

A WAYFARER'S VOLUNTARY

By WALLACE B. NICHOLS

I SEEK to be no captain over you;
Rather am I a watchman on your wall,
Proud to be mingled with your life's ado,
One, since he loves you, eager to your call.

I seek to wear no passionate cognisance,
So, by that token, to be named your knight;
Rather am I unvowed, a poor free-lance,
Your comrade for a term in quest and fight.

I seek to be no minstrel in your bower,
Begging a rosy guerdon for my pain;
Rather am I a shelterer 'neath your tower,
Whom you hear singing in the cold and rain.

I seek for no undue prerogative,
I ask no word your heart were loth to spare;
Rather am I your brother, who may live
Free in your bountiful presence, happy there.

I seek for nought save to be always yours;
And, being your friend, what can befall amiss?
I have found in you one fortune that endures,
And life is more magnificent for your kiss.

ROO OF THE ATOLLS

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

A MINUTE passed—two minutes. Down there Roo's sleek bronze body was no more than a flickering shadow on the pale green floor of the lagoon. He had gone deep, for it is in the depths and the less accessible crevices of the coral that the old shell is to be found, bigger than soup plates, gnarled and barnacle-encrusted without, but containing a lustre incomparable, and perhaps—— But one must not speculate. It is not done in the Paumotus, nor any other pearling grounds in the Pacific. Things happen or do not happen, according to one's own particular beliefs, and to think too much about them brings ill-fortune in its wake as surely as preparing the basket before the fish is caught.

Three minutes came and went. The canoe rode empty and inert on the silken surface of the lagoon. A bo'sun bird swooped out of the brazen sky and, alighting on an outrigger pole, preened himself undisturbed. The shadow on the sloping floor of the lagoon was no longer visible. Roo had gone still deeper, to fifteen fathoms, perhaps, and into a world of his own, where none but his kind could follow. Bubbles rose, tiny globules of light that flickered upward and were gone, followed at last by a dark form that shot from the depths like a meteor.

Roo shook the water from his hair, pushed the goggles from his eyes on to his forehead, and wallowed to the canoe. About his neck hung a string bag filled with shell. This he flung aboard, and, clambering after it, commenced opening operations with the same leisurely deliberation that marked all his movements.

His was killing work, and there is no object in hurrying over suicide. Already his eyes protruded ominously, a perpetual dirge resounded in one ear, and on occasion he had caught himself stumbling over an obstacle that did not exist. Inevitably he would go the way of all pearl-divers in the end unless—— Something fell from the half-opened shell in his hand, tinkled against the knife-blade, and dropped between his feet.

In the breathless moments that followed he knew that the unmentioned dream haunting the thoughts of every diver had in his own case come true.

Unlike most people of the atolls, Roo was a man of set purpose—the gaining of the world for the most beautiful woman in it, nothing less. It was for this that his eyes bulged, his ear sang, and he stumbled as he walked. He placed the pearl reverently in his mouth, caressing it with his tongue, and paddled unhurriedly for the beach.

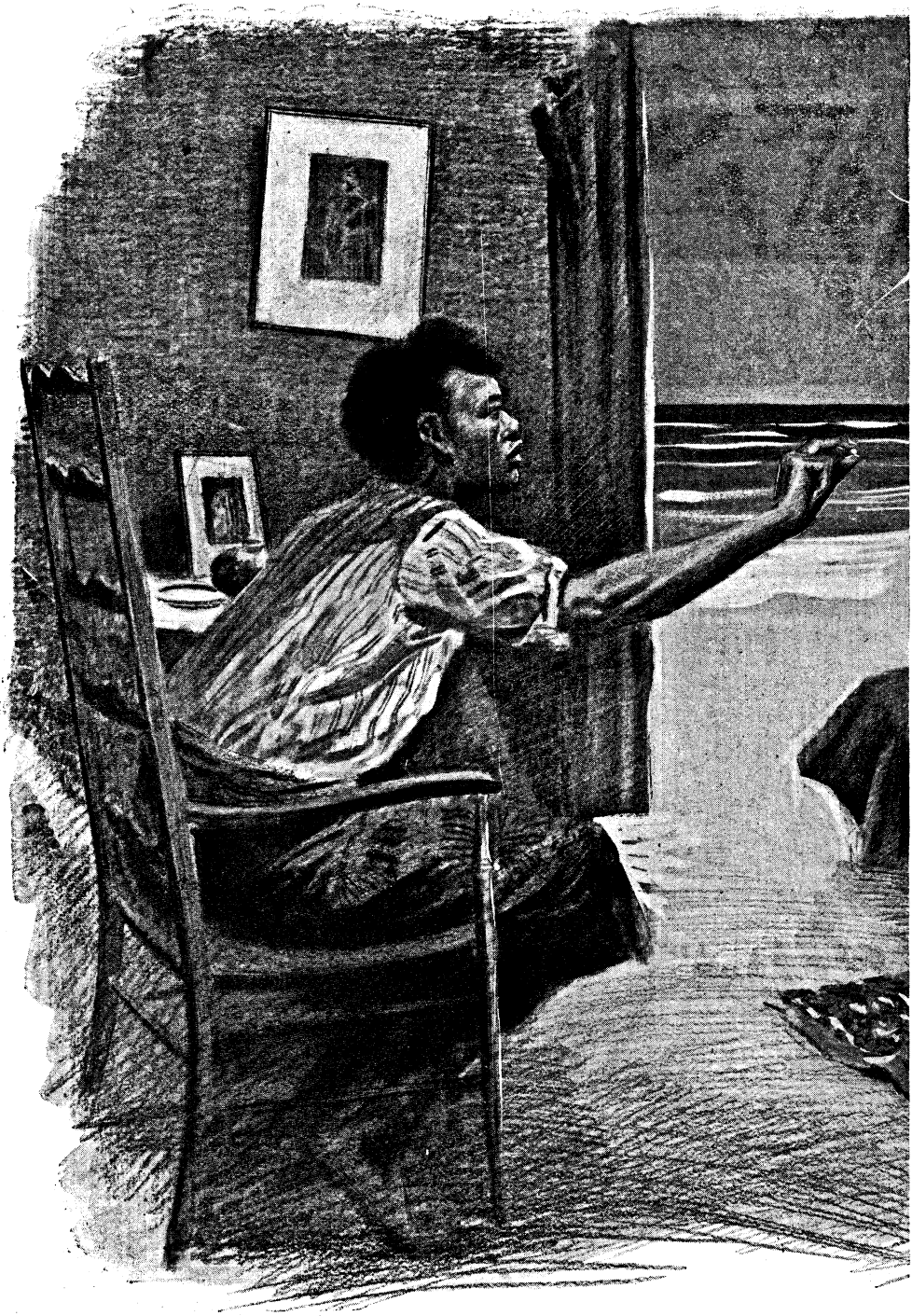
The omnivorous buyer, seated on his spine in a wicker chair, glowered contemptuously at Roo's meagre offering of shell.

"And they are *pique* at that," he complained languidly in native parlance. "You must do better than this, or there will be trouble."

Roo appeared unimpressed, and shifted his weight from one enormous foot to the other, whereat the buyer sighed, levered himself out of the chair, and went into the store, returning presently with a formidable-looking ledger.

"You now owe the Compagnie Maritime two thousand francs," he droned, "and we can allow you nothing more until at least half this amount is paid in shell. If you dispose of it elsewhere, the Compagnie will take action."

The tone was that of one who repeats a set piece. It *was* a set piece, composed by one of the bewhiskered directors of the Compagnie in Paris. The buyer recited it, according to instructions, not less than five



"He said a great deal . . . and long before he had done,

times daily, and had long since ceased to derive amusement from the naïve idea of "taking action" against a grinning, mother-naked savage of the Paumotus.

"It shall be paid," said Roo, still unmoved. "In the meantime I desire a pareu and a silk shirt."

"Take them, then," snapped the buyer, subsiding hopelessly on to his spine, "but bring us *shell*."



Mata was leaning forward with parted lips and shining eyes."

It was on the tip of Roo's tongue to say that he had done with shell, and done with the Compagnie Maritime—a man is prone to such foolishness in the hour of triumph—but there was something of vastly more importance on the tip of his tongue at the moment, and he refrained.

Resplendent in his new pareu and silk shirt, he sought the most beautiful woman in the world, and found her ensconced in

her superlative parlour, powdering her nose. Mata was beautiful—there was no denying that—and, what was perhaps equally desirable, she was the last word in Tahitian culture to reach the Paumotus. Though merely the daughter of a local shell-sorter afflicted with elephantiasis, she had stayed for more than a month with distant half-caste relatives in Papeete. Consequently, she knew precisely what to do and how to do it. Her surroundings reflected this knowledge. Externally her father's house might be no more than a battered and rusty corrugated iron shed set on a blazing strip of coral sand, but somewhere enshrined within that unworthy structure was Mata's parlour.

Here one sat on chairs instead of mats. The lamp was an intricate affair of dangling prisms and painted flowers. There were spindle-legged "occasional" tables supporting nothing of any practical use, a heavy pile carpet, a gramophone, framed photographs of wedding groups, and an overpowering stench of scent.

Then there was Mata herself, usually in pink silk, a gold bangle above the elbow of one shapely arm, a pear-shaped pipi dangling from either of her incomparable ears, and a pair of languorous but all-seeing brown eyes rolling assiduously in her well-poised little head.

Usually Roo entered the precincts with a considerable amount of trepidation, in spite of the fact that he had supplied the gramophone and the bangle, which, by the way, were the sole reasons that Mata suffered him. But to-day he was filled with the courage of achievement. He found it possible to look his awe-inspiring surroundings in the eye, to sit squarely on unaccustomed furniture, and even dispose of the eternal encumbrance of his feet.

Mata noticed the change in his demeanour and wondered vaguely, but held her peace. She knew that whatever caused it was bound to come to the surface in a child-like nature such as Rôo's. And she was not mistaken.

"Mata," he boomed in his deep chest voice, "the time has come for us to marry."

"So?" she questioned with charming insouciance.

"It is so," chanted Roo. "You wish for Papeete, for a house, for many stockings of silk, for a piano—for the world. It is yours. I can give it you, I!" He thumped his massive chest dramatically. "For two years I have worked alone and in deep waters—for you. For two years I have faced the perils of shark and devil-fisli . . ."

He said a great deal more—the people of the atolls are not addicted to mock modesty—and long before he had done, Mata was leaning forward with parted lips and shining eyes.

"Show it me," she whispered. "Roo, you must show it me!"

Roo did as he was bid. He was incapable of doing anything else where Mata was concerned. She took the pearl from between his clumsy fingers and devoured it with her eyes. There was not a doubt that all Roo had said was true. Mata was a judge. Her only regret was that out of her many and varied suitors success had fallen to this man of bulging eyes and incipient paralysis. She studied him furtively and for the first time thoroughly. Could anything be done with him? Was there the slightest hope of rendering him passable before the critical tribunal of her distant half-caste relatives in Papeete? She was afraid not. And yet—— Her glance fell again to the pearl, appraising its value to the last franc. The computation made almost anything possible.

"You will sell to André?" she suggested.

Roo shook his head.

"We will go to Papeete," he said with unusual firmness, "and I will sell to the Chinaman. He is honest."

Mata allowed a low, rippling laugh to escape her. She knew well Roo's opinion of his rival André.

"I was but teasing, my Roo," she said.

"Then we sail on the *Miri* in three days' time," boomed Roo.

"Three days!" wailed Mata in simulated alarm. "Only three days?"

"That is all, my Mata, and in the meantime no one shall know?"

"Need you ask? And you will take care——"

Roo tapped his belt significantly. A man is prone to such foolishness in the hour of triumph. On one side was a small pouch, on the other a sheathed knife. Then he passed out into the sunshine, stumbling over nothing whatever in the doorway.

There was little time and much to be done. Two days Roo spent shelling with the others, thereby convincing the weary buyer for the Compagnie Maritime that his advice had been taken. So much so that Roo succeeded in extracting from him a Prince Albert suit and its appurtenances. This he donned at noon of the third day, and, in a bath of perspiration such as only these atrocities in raiment can produce, was

striding into the settlement when he met André.

"Where now?" queried this half-caste pearl expert, with his ingratiating smile.

"To my business," boomed Roo.

"And that?"

"Is my business," returned Roo, and instantly wished that he had not said it. It was his to allay suspicion, not arouse it, especially at this, the eleventh hour

André's ferret eyes rested on Roo with a drunkard's fatuous solemnity

"And you have no time, not even for one small drink with a friend?"

"There is always time for that," said Roo, with what for him was supreme cunning.

André drew a glass flask from his hip pocket.

"The best out of Papeete!" he chanted, holding it up to the light and swaying gently. "To good-will between rivals, eh?"

And at that hour Roo found it in his heart to pity André. There is no solicitude so genuine as that of the successful suitor for his less fortunate rival. Roo drank, and in less than two minutes was lying prone on the beach, with the attenuated fingers of André the expert at his belt.

He opened his eyes on a canopy of stars. It was night, and the dirge in his ear had swelled to a roar, and there was a band of fire about his head. Also the pearl was gone.

A giant figure in a dishevelled Prince Albert suit staggered to its feet and stumbled through the sand in the starlight. It came to a halt before the home of the most beautiful woman in the world. The superlative parlour was deserted. Only the outhouse showed any signs of life in the form of a flickering yellow light, and on the mats beside it Mata's father nursing his mammoth leg, and swaying and moaning in anguish as befits the bereaved.

Roo took a stride towards the squatting figure, his hands outstretched, the fingers a-work, then turned aside and passed down the beach. For a moment he stood staring over the starlit sea, then with quick, ferocious movements he tore the Prince Albert suit from his body and flung it on the sand.

When the moon rose, it found him squatting at the water's edge, still staring seaward. Roo was thinking.

* * * * *

And the schooner *Miri* was ploughing a phosphorescent furrow through the night.

"But it was so simple, my pearl, that I hardly like to speak of it. They are big, but they are soft, these Paumotan savages. One tap, in fair fight, too, and the thing was done."

Thus André at the ship's rail, with Mata at his side asking a woman's unnecessary questions.

"I do not like it, André," she said. "That man is different to the others. He will not forget."

André turned and studied the alluring profile at his elbow.

"Then you would have had me make it impossible for him to remember?" he suggested.

Mata did not answer, but her meaning was none the less clear.

"Little savage!" laughed André, and stroked her hand as it lay on the rail. "Have no fear. Papeete is not the Paumotus. There are gendarmes to protect life and property. Besides, how is he to prove he ever had a pearl?"

"That is so," mused Mata. But she shivered, and André fetched her bedizened wrap from the cabin.

On arrival in Papeete, where André sold the pearl for thirty thousand francs, the sequence of events was as inevitable as may be supposed. From mere neglect, André's treatment of Mata descended by rapid stages to vicious brutality, and within the month she was a broken woman.

Of an evening she would escape from the house that was her torture chamber, and walk aimlessly in a dowdy wrapper along the coral wall that formed the beach. Here the water was deep, and clear, and clean. Mata loved to look down—down. It reminded her of a Paumotan lagoon.

And here it was that on a night of dazzling moonlight a head clove the water at her feet. With a curious lack of surprise or alarm, she saw that it was Roo's. He *had* died, then.

Presently it spoke, with the booming intonation of old.

"You are not happy, then, my Mata?"

She did not answer. She could not. But her head was bowed until it rested on her knees. Her body commenced to sway, and the moan of the bereaved floated out on the water.

When she looked up, the head was gone.

* * * * *

André had bought his election to the club that overlooks the harbour Here on the wide balcony, and over countless absinthes

at the little round tables, he could mix on equal terms with the elect of Papeete, win or lose prodigious sums at cards, roulette, or billiards, and dabble in pearls on quite an imposing scale.

The life suited him It presented possibilities of a chicanery that was second nature to André. He became famous in the Island underworld as a "fence." No matter how a stone had been acquired, André would buy it without question—for less than half its value. Often he would be sitting at cards when one of his runners whispered in his ear, and he would excuse himself to interview some quaking thief or murderer, or both, in the deeper shadows of the beach. It paid. Such people are more tractable than most.

That was why on a certain night he deserted an unprecedented run of luck to plunge into the velvet darkness of the beach road.

He found his man, as the runner had said, under the flamboyants at the end of the coral wall. André did not speak. He was in the habit of letting others do that. But this fellow, a hulking savage, by the loom of his half-naked body in the shadows, was strangely silent.

"Well?" snapped André impatiently.

A hand was outstretched, an immense hand, and André's went to meet it. But the other proved to be empty, and its fingers closed on his like a steel trap. Another shot from the darkness, enveloping his face as in a mask.

"Greetings, my friend!" boomed the voice of Roo. "We will make it a long one, of Papeete's best, eh?"

The entwined and writhing bodies struck the water as one. The inky waters parted and closed. A minute passed—two minutes. Roo had gone deep, to fifteen fathoms, perhaps, and into a world of his own, where none but his kind could follow. The ripples expanded in ever-widening circles, and were still. Three—four minutes came and went. Roo was surpassing his own record, and it was not before the end of the fifth that his head broke water and he clambered gasping up the coral wall.

Mata was tossing sleeplessly on her mats, waiting for she knew not what. She was always waiting now, and never did she know what for until André made it clear.

At the sound of a naked footfall on the verandah steps she started as though stung.

"Where is André?" she demanded of the giant figure that loomed in the doorway.

"He sleeps," boomed Roo. "We have been drinking, André and I. Come, my Mata!"

SPRING.

BREATHLESSLY fast Spring comes at last,
Breaking from Winter's bonds harsh and confining.
Over the wood soft shadows brood,
And the Firth is shining with drifting blue.
The joy of winds from the southlands blowing—
The airy swirl of her gracious going—
Has turned the world to a careless rapture,
That the blackbirds capture each year anew.

Peace you may find only behind
The cincture of hills to the skyline fading:
Faint and afar, Spring's echoes are
With music raiding the hearts of all.
Pan is abroad and his train is sweeping
Through sun-steeped glades and by still ponds sleeping,
While clearer summons the magic laughter
To follow after the world-old call.

A. M. LAWRENCE.

MOIRA'S CAR

By C. FLEMING-WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

"EXCUSE me, but do you know if there is a garage anywhere near here?"

Moira saw only the top of a head and one eye over the corner of the raised bonnet. He had the sort of hair you want to run your fingers through, and the one eye looked interesting

"As far as I can remember," she said, "the nearest garage is about seven miles away, at Ambleside."

"Go on; be cheerful!" he replied in a tragic voice. "Do you know if there happens to be a barn or disused pigsty here, with a south aspect, main drainage, and company's water, where I could take up residence for a few weeks?"

"Surely it isn't as bad as that?" Moira laughed. "Have you broken something?"

"Most of the Commandments, two finger-nails, one collar stud, and some bally gadget inside my magneto."

"I believe I could find you a new collar stud about two miles from here; there is a church nearer still; I possess a pair of nail scissors, and I'm hot stuff on magnetos."

The other eye, a shapely nose, slightly shop-soiled, a row of white teeth, and a huge portion of body came suddenly to view.

"Deliverer, I greet you," he said. "For Heaven's sake, come and work with cunning on my magneto. We'll leave the rest."

Moira hesitated. It was not her custom to enter into conversation with strange young men, but——

To analyse that "but" fully would mean writing out the life-story of Moira O'Donnell.

To explain it sketchily, Moira was "fed to the teeth" with life in general. It had rained continuously for five days, she was off her drive—"couldn't putt for little apples"—and her best friend had wired that she had got measles (the repatriated German variety), and couldn't come for a holiday.

But, much more far-reaching than any of these external things, the trouble was really psychological. Moira at eighteen had enlisted as a motor-driver, age twenty-two, and for nearly three years had the time of her life.

Good to look at, sound as a bell, morally and physically, with the subtle "mechanical instinct" well developed, she had proved herself a real motor-driver. She loved the work, no matter how hard, she was respected by all ranks, and loved by most. She could have been utterly spoiled, colloquially or in fact, by raising her little finger, but her little finger kept stern hold on the steering-wheel.

When she demobilised to become housekeeper to her father, it was a big wrench. She tried to organise her kitchen, introduced mechanical labour-saving devices, and was beginning to take a real interest in that department, when cook gave notice. Her father preferred a good cook to an up-to-date kitchen, and she retired to the morning-room. Her household duties were almost nominal.

The ordinary life of the average young lady of her acquaintance was not Moira's idea of the way to live, so there was heaps of room for quite a big "but."

In speaking to a man with a car Moira was but going back to the old life. She really hardly noticed him; her eyes were taking in all the familiar lines of the car. She saw at once that it was a Boxhall, the same make she had lived with, fought with, coddled and nourished in those days hundreds of years ago.

Murray Tasker was therefore very fortunate. By himself, with all his charm of manner and his undeniable good looks, he might have found it a very difficult task to get to know Moira, even if introduced in the proper way. Here, on a lonely mountain road, with a sick Boxhall in need of mothering, he possessed a sure way to her interest and a passport for himself. So, instead of walking on, Moira came towards the car and put one hand caressingly on the radiator cap while she talked.

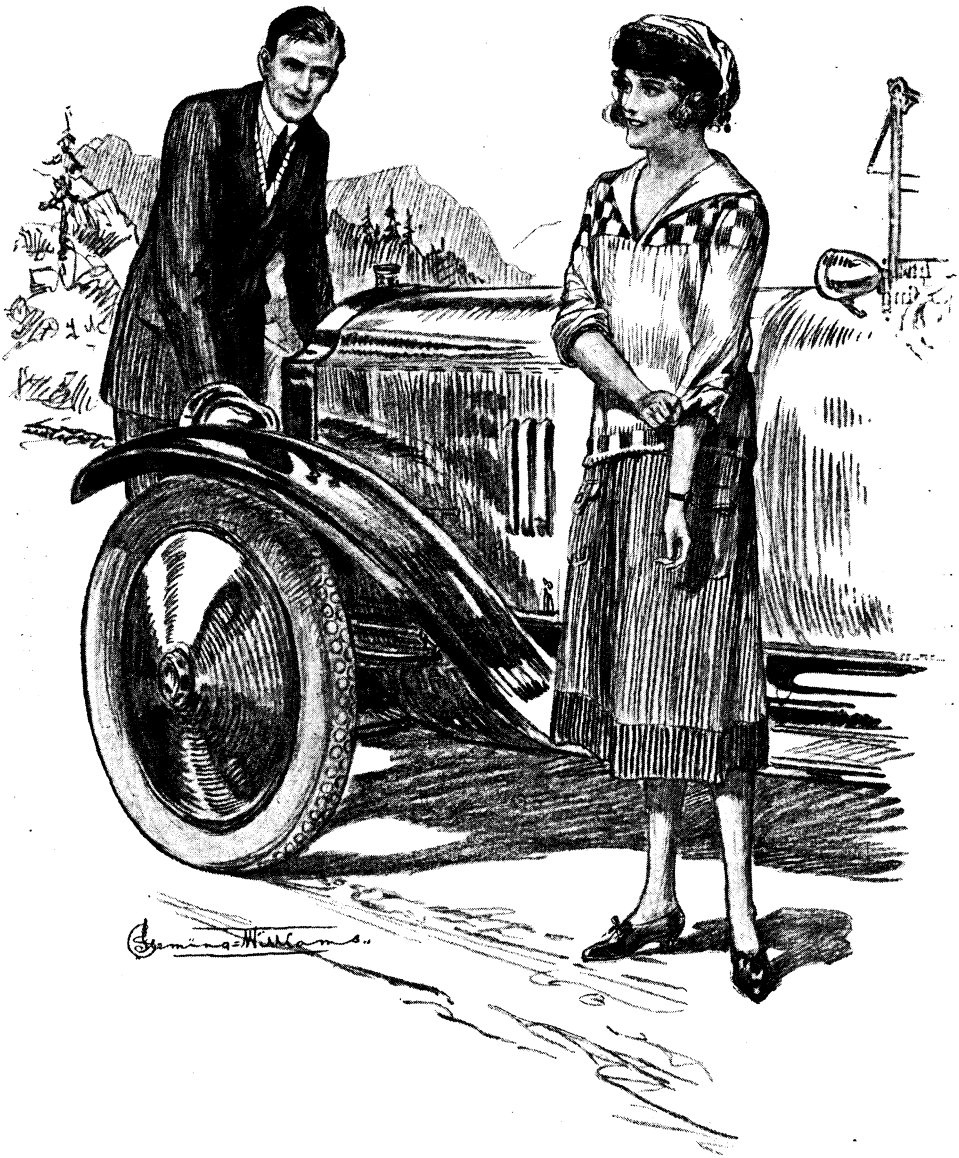
"I don't really know very much about magnetos," she said, "but I drove this type of car in France, and I was rather fond of doing things and understanding things myself."

"Where were you in France?"

"Yes, and his friend of the eye-glass. Did you know Nanette?"

"Of course I did."

For half an hour the magneto was forgotten—both were lost in a flood of comparative reminiscences.



"'You miracle of a girl!'"

"Some of the time I was at St. Omer; we had a base there."

"Good Heavens!" said Tasker. "I know it well. I was in the Air Force, and often used to come there. Did you ever meet the Porky Boy?"

Moira was the first to break out of it, because she began to realise that Tasker was a very delightful boy, and, womanlike, felt need of something to disguise the fact.

"How about it?" she said, pointing

inside the bonnet. "What happened, and what have you done?"

"What happened?" he said ponderingly. "I was climbing up this sweet little pimple beautifully. When I got to that bad hairpin bend, I changed down to second gear, then went back to third again too soon. Coming down again, I missed my gear, and in the confusion I must have pressed the accelerator with the foot I was holding the brake. The engine screamed round at umpteen thousand revolutions and then stopped. Tried to start her. Nothing doing. So here I am."

"How do you know it's the magneto?" asked Moira.

"There's heaps of petrol at the carburettor, the jet isn't choked, plugs are clean, but—and here the plot thickens—I can't get any spark. I've tried all the plugs, but nothing doing."

"Have you looked to see if the rocker arm is stuck?"

"You mean the little thing that jiggles up and down, and goes round, too, when you turn the magneto?"

"Yes, the 'make and break.'"

"No."

"Well, you turn the starting-handle slowly, and I'll see if it works all right."

Moira took off her raincoat, rolled up the sleeves of her jumper, and got to work, while Tasker turned the handle slowly.

Her delicate fingers soon ascertained that the rocker arm was out of action.

"I've found your trouble," she said. "The rocker arm spring is broken. Probably, when you raced your engine, it snapped. Have you got a magneto spanner?"

"I really don't know what I've got yet. I bought the car at Slough, had it 'tiddled' up in London, and here I am, taking the car up North to my home in Scotland. I didn't wait to get any tools before I started, except a movable spannner and a screwdriver. Let's have a look round."

Moira helped in the search, lifting up the seats and probing in the door pockets.

"Good Heavens!" she said suddenly, pausing in the act of raising the rear cushions.

"What's the matter?"

"You bought this car at Slough?"

"I think so."

"Look here," she said, pointing to a small circular patch of leather carefully stuck on the seat. "I put that patch on!"

"You did?"

"Yes. This is my very own old Boxhall. We had an air raid one night, and a splinter went right through the seat. I cut a round patch out of a leather bag I had, thinned the edges, and stuck it on with rubber solution. It's held ever since."

"What an extraordinary coincidence!"

"To prove it," Moira continued, "look at the off-side wing-stay. I struck a tree, trying to avoid a shell-hole, and broke it. I got an old blacksmith to weld a new flange to it. Come and look."

Together they examined it. Yes, one side was obviously the original one, and the other much more clumsy and misshapen.

"Oh, dear," she said, "it does bring a big lump into my throat to see the old thing again! I drove her for nearly two years. How is she running?"

"Fine, till she stopped."

"I feel in honour bound to get you going again now."

"My dear young lady, you have already done more than enough in finding my trouble. I dare say I can manage."

"Are you trying to get rid of me?"

"Heaven forbid!"

"How are you going to repair the broken spring?"

"Haven't thought about it."

"Well, I have, and I don't see any way out of it except by taking the damaged part to a garage and getting a new one. That means a fourteen-mile walk."

"Phew!"

"And we haven't found a spanner to get it adrift with."

The only thing available proved to be a large movable spanner, hardly the instrument for tackling the delicate mechanism of a magneto.

Moira made a gallant effort, but had to give it up. The tool was too big to fit, and too long to be handled in the confined space.

"I can't do it," she said mournfully. "There is nothing for it but to get help from the garage. We can't even take it off."

"That's all right. Don't worry. Perhaps I can telephone from somewhere."

"Yes," she assented. "Our home is only four miles away; you can telephone from there."

"I say, that is awfully good of you," he replied.

"I do hate being done. Don't you?" asked Moira, after being helped on with her coat.

"Yes, but I know when I'm beaten."

"Oh, you're a man. We women never do. History is full of the women who have killed themselves for a lost cause. That is why some of us grow old so soon. Of course, sometimes we win through in the end by a miracle."

"By Jove," said Tasker, "how some of you girls stuck to your jobs was a miracle, if you like!"

"Well, you see, the ordinary woman is so used to sticking to her job in the home against all odds, and with children pulling at her skirts all the time, and never dreaming of an eight-hour day. They have been doing it for centuries. It comes natural by heredity."

"Yes, I suppose there's truth in that."

They tidied up the car, put the hood up, and prepared to start.

"There's one good thing," said Tasker: "no one can run away with her."

"No, it's not very likely," she agreed. "I hate leaving her, though. Oh, how I wish I could think of something to do!"

"Frankly, I'm glad," he said. "It gives me the chance of knowing you better."

"I should be much happier if you were driving away."

"The blooming bird! By Jove, do you mean it?"

Moira blushed. "Not quite that way," she said.

"I absolutely refuse to be abandoned or snubbed into departure. You wouldn't drive a poor lonely orphan out into the cold, cold world?"

"No," she replied, laughing, "not unless I was at the steering-wheel."

"Then it would be a most delightful world," he said meaningly. "I wouldn't care if it snowed."

"You are a very rash or a very young man, Mr.—er——"

"My name is Murray."

"Mr. Murray."

"You can leave out the 'Mr.,' because there is another name after that—Tasker."

"Murray Tasker, Murray Tasker?" she mused. "The name seems familiar."

"I believe there was a Tasker just escaped hanging a few years ago for the alleged murdering of his fourth wife. No doubt you are thinking of that."

"Is the fifth still alive?"

"Very much so," he said, and looked straight into her eyes.

It was all nonsense, but somehow Moira felt the need of a change of subject.

After walking a few minutes in silence, Moira suddenly stopped.

"I've got it!" she exclaimed excitedly.

"What?"

"Of course. How silly of me not to think of it before! I know how to repair my—your magneto."

"Really? How?"

"Have you got a tyre patch?"

"No."

"Got a spare tube?"

"No."

"Surely we can find a bit of soft rubber somewhere. Don't you see? We can jam it between the rocker arm and the fixed part. It will make a fine spring, perfectly insulated."

"It sounds all right."

"Come on. I'll race you back." Away she sped, with Tasker literally panting behind.

But it was not quite as easy as she thought. That little piece of rubber was hard to find.

"Of course," said Moira, "as a last resource we could cut up the tube of the spare wheel, but that seems a shame. Wait. Let's both think hard."

Tasker thought hard, but his eyes were fixed on this wonderful tomboy of a girl, and his thoughts were far from rubber. The softest thing he could think of was his own heart.

"Have you got a penknife?" she asked at last, after a few moments' concentration.

"Yes, here you are."

She proceeded to cut a circular rubber stud off one of the front tyres. Carefully trimming it, wetting the blade with her mouth the while to prevent the knife from jagging, she jammed a piece of the soft rubber into the magneto.

Then, closing the bonnet and starting to unroll her sleeves, she turned her back to the job with an air of finality. It was pure swank—a little artistic touch which those who knew Moira called a "Moiraism."

"Will you come and start her up?" she called out.

Filled with incredulous wonder, Tasker gave one or two vigorous pulls to the handle, and lo, there was a spit and then a pleasant purr from the engine!

"You miracle of a girl!" he ejaculated. "You make me feel a worm!"

"Well, wriggle into the seat, and let me drive myself home. It won't be far out of your way. Anyway, I will guarantee that rubber spring for twenty miles."

The drive to Moira's home was only a few miles. She soon got over the strangeness of want of practice in driving her old car, but she drove slowly in deference to the repair.

Ever since she had heard Murray Tasker's name she had been puzzling to remember where she had heard it before. At last she traced it.

"I know who you are," she said, keeping her eyes on the road ahead, partly for safety and partly because out of the corner of one of them she could see Tasker watching her intently all the time. "You are the son of Tasker, the big shipping man on the Clyde. During the War you were a famous ace, and covered your chest with decorations. How's that?"

"You've been reading *The Tatler*," he laughed.

"Yes, I remember reading all about you. I forgot your age for the moment. Fancy my presuming to assist such a big gun! At first I thought you were a boy not yet returned to school after the holidays."

"I take that as a compliment. I'm nearly twenty-eight. As we are on personalities, I knew you from the first moment I saw you."

Moira looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes, I've known you all my life. You have been with me in my dreams; you are the girl——"

"By Jove," burst out Moira, "this old 'bus is running just as well as ever she did! Isn't she a marvel? It makes me feel all dithery inside to have her again. I simply can't get over the extraordinary coincidence."

Tasker knew she was talking to cover embarrassment, and was satisfied that she had some inkling of the drift of his remarks, therefore he made no further reference to the subject.

When they reached Moira's home, she insisted on his being introduced to her father and stopping for a cup of tea. It was not a big house, but Tasker made a mental comment that whoever was responsible for its furnishing and decoration was the sort of person he would like to have to superintend his own home.

When the moment came for his departure, Moira felt "choky." Tasker noticed the moisture in her eyes.

"What is the matter, little girl?" he asked tenderly.

"Oh, I'm a pig; that is all!" she said. "I've got everything a girl ought to want, and yet somehow I'm miserable. Seeing the old Boxhall again makes me feel as if I am living in a cage. Father is a dear, but he is old-fashioned—will not let me have a car, and wants me to order my life like the girls used to when he was a boy. Good-bye!"

She ran away with the tears about to tumble over her eyelashes, praying Heaven that Tasker had not seen, and cross with herself for behaving like an infant.

Three days afterwards she went for a long, hard tramp after the postman had called and left no letter for her.

"He might have had the decency to thank me in writing," she thought, and then grew more cross with herself for minding.

On her return she saw the Boxhall at the front porch. She ran in through the scullery yard, her heart hammering in a most disconcerting manner, reached her room by way of the servants' staircase, and hastily began to preen herself. She descended a few minutes afterwards the picture of demure self-possession.

Her father met her in the hall. "Oh, there you are, my dear. A chauffeur brought the car outside, and said that he had instructions to leave it here and give you this letter."

Moira snatched it and tore it open.

"Dear Miss Moira," she read, "I am sending the old Boxhall back to where it really belongs. Will you please do me the honour of keeping it? No one will ever treat it as you will, and it deserves a better fate than in my vandal hands. Do not hesitate to accept it, as my father has two other cars which he has given over for my use. May I thank you again, not only for the rescue, but for the most delightful hours of my life?"

"Oh, daddy, dear," she said, when her father had read it open-mouthed, "isn't it horrible to have to send it away again?"

"Of course I cannot dream of allowing you to accept it. What an amazing young man!"

Moira immediately jumped on her bicycle and pedalled to the telegraph office.

"Thank you, but impossible accept. Writing."

Two hours afterwards a wire was delivered addressed to Moira.

"Can you meet me Windermere Station eight to-night with car?"

Moira put her bicycle into the back of the car, and was at the station to time.

She was standing by the car, holding her cycle, when he arrived.

"I've brought it, you see," she said, "and you needn't drive me home again, because I can go on my push-bike."

"Look here, Miss Moira," he replied, "you are treating me very shabbily. I haven't told you how the repairs held out yet—in fact, I've lots to say to you, so I may as well do it while we drive home, as stand here and do it."

"Very well. Shall I drive, or will you?"

"I would rather you did," he said. "I know I should miss my gears again out of sheer nervousness in front of you."

They were soon out on the road skirting the lake. The sun was lowering behind the mountains and setting their world aflame or making purple shadows, jewelling tree and field and rock, or toning them to opalescent splendour.

"After I left you," said Tasker presently, "I got to Ambleside, and managed to secure a new spring. I didn't fit it, though. I just bought a magneto spanner, put them all in my pocket, and drove on. Your repair carried me right home to Glasgow. Look!"

He held up to her face a little circular gold case. The lid flew open, and inside, behind glass, was a little piece of rubber from a tyre.

"How absurd you are!" she said, but she did not think that. She did not know what she was thinking. Her heart was hammering for no reason at all, and she had to keep firm hold on the steering-wheel to prevent her hands from trembling.

Tasker got out his pipe and made several clumsy attempts to light it.

"Would you mind stopping a minute?" he said.

She pulled up at the side of the road.

"Now we've stopped, and you can give me your attention," he continued, "I want to make a proposition. You have refused the car. Would you reconsider your decision if I threw myself in as well? Really, Moira, I've thought of nothing else but you day and night since I met you three days ago. If I waited three years, it would be just the same. It's a beastly nuisance for you, but you will simply have to take both of us. Will you, dear?"

Moira turned to see if he were joking, saw his eyes, and suddenly realised she was up against the real thing, both for herself and for him.

She made a big effort to gain control of herself, and then, to her own amazement, just went "loppy."

* * * * *

Moira says that husbands and cars are very much alike. They both want nursing. Double de-clutch to avoid a row, a little care when the hills come, and that's that.

THE COST OF LIVING

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

IF the champion cross-country jockey who got first into Aix with the "good news"—see Browning—had been greeted by the burghers with a charge from the municipal arquebus, and afterwards chivvied out of the place by all the privately-owned dogs at the instigation of their respective masters, I could have understood the poor fellow's feelings. There is nothing more damping than to go dashing up to somebody with a brand-new piece of good fortune and have it coldly received. Margaret's remarks, when I came to her with the great news that I was at last in a position to get married, had the same effect on me as strong disinfectant on a bunch of germs.

You must understand that Margaret and I were not officially engaged. *The Morning Post* had not staggered Society with any announcement about us. She had declined to be bound, although I had every reason to hope that she would one day permit herself to be tied. We "walked out" and "kept company"—if I may be allowed to borrow two phrases from the striking classes. I prefer the latter, since motor drives and Sundays up the river were our principal amusements when my balance at the bank allowed of such.

Margaret was on the stage, having a small part and the understudy of a larger part in the most inane musical show that a conscienceless management ever had the impertinence to foist on the London public. It had been running for eighteen months, and looked like running as many years. I was that most pathetic of all professional things—a briefless barrister. I had been existing on the interest of a small capital, tied up so securely as to defy the ingenuity of a Jew lawyer to undo it. But one bright morning found me the owner, and, if I wished, the prospective occupant, of an East Anglian manor.

It was Margaret's genius for cross-examination which turned the noble old Jacobean house into a ten-roomed cottage, and the broad acres of my inheritance into ill-drained marshes productive of nothing but bulrushes. Ten minutes of her genial conversation made me feel that a curse instead of a blessing had been bequeathed me.

"The estate," I said triumphantly, "is valued at seven hundred a year."

"Deduct tithes and land tax."

"Let's forget them," I begged.

"Very well, only don't get caught doing that! Deduct money spent on repairs, and you'll just have enough left to pay the wages of the staff of servants necessary to run the place."

"We are going to live the simple life," I said.

"We?"

"All right, I, if you like—if you don't know what's good for you. 'Nine bean rows will I have there——'"

"How many bean rows make nine?" Margaret asked.

"These are going to be runners, so you won't be able to count 'em. '—and a hive for the honey-bee——'"

"Only one honey-bee?"

"Noah only kept two," said I in my superior way, "and I shall doubtless buy another if one isn't enough. And dwell all day 'in the bee-loud glade.'"

"Your one bee will have to do a lot of buzzing."

"I'd already decided on two. They shall buzz in shifts. I shan't dream of overworking my stock. A merciful man is merciful to his bee-east. Seriously, dear old girl, how does it strike you?"

"It would strike me very cold in the winter, very hot in the summer, and very boring all the year round." She made what

very few lady novelists would be able to resist calling a *moue*. "Oh, Jimmy, dear, don't ask me to marry you and live in a place like that! I know what it means. I was brought up in the country. I don't think I could bear it even with you."

"You don't love me!" I said.

In most of our duets we ran the whole gamut of the scales, passing from laughter to somewhere nigh to tears, returning again to laughter by way of a kiss and a kind word on both sides. She rose and rested her hands on my shoulders, and brought her gravely-smiling lips close to my sulky face.

"I do," she said, "lots! But perhaps I haven't got it in me to love anyone enough to bury myself in the country with them. I can't help it. That's my nature. I've told you all along that I'm shallow, and only care for amusement, and that you've been pretending to yourself that I'm something that I'm not. I've always been honest with you, haven't I?"

"You've always taken extraordinary pains to run yourself down."

"It comes to the same. The country's in my blood. I was born and bred in East Anglia. But London's got into my bones. Lights, noise, people, the comforts you can't get anywhere else—I love them all."

"You mean that since you've achieved two verses in the second act, the applause of a few fools, and your photograph in *The Daily Terror*, you've found what you consider to be Life. You'd throw everything worth having overboard for the sake of these stupid toys?"

She withdrew her hands.

"If you like," she said.

"Altogether," I said, "we shall have about fourteen hundred a year. As things are now, we couldn't live at all comfortably on that in Town, but we might in the country. Besides, I shall make more. I shall throw up the Bar altogether and have a shot at farming."

"You'll buy a shilling handbook, I suppose, Jimmy?"

"Have you quite exhausted the supply of cold water?"

She laughed then, and so delightfully that I had to laugh, too.

"Oh, James," she said, "you funny little boy of thirty, come here and learn some real wisdom. We should be poorer and more miserable there even than in London. We should need at least three indoor servants and a gardener, and we should actually require more. People might call If they didn't, it would be deadlier than ever, and if they did, they'd be expensive. Everybody that we know would consider us fair game every time they wanted a cheap week-end, and I think I should die if we couldn't entertain them properly. Then there'll be the house, with a traditional ghost, damp, gloomy, full of rats, spiders, and beetles, without a bathroom——"

"Hadn't you better see it first?" I urged.

"Hadn't you better go, and then come back and report? Not that you'll ever induce me to live in it, Jimmy."

I went next day.

II.

THE house had stood empty for years, but the land was let. "The comfortable family mansion" stood in a belt of unkempt trees between two marshes. One had but to look at it to be sure that all sorts of unsuspected fungi grew in the cellars. The thick ivy and the outside shutters of the upper windows were very useful to bats. Of all the dreary, dingy, rat-infested, ghost-ridden-looking places I had ever seen, it ran an easy first. Mariana's Moated Grange must have been a Knightsbridge maisonnette compared with it. My heart sank at the first view.

A rustic gentleman in a blue smock—who addressed me as "sir" when he remembered to, and "bor" when he was excited—elected to be my guide, philosopher, and friend. He was a chatty fellow, a veritable mine of local information. He it was who informed me that the house had been empty so long because the last tenant had cut his throat—which I could well believe—and was reputed to repeat this pleasing trick at midnight whenever he could find an audience of one. It was just the sort of legend that Margaret would be sure to enjoy.

"Them brown 'uns," he said, referring to some of the assorted rats which vacated the hall as we entered by the door, "be supposed to carry the plague. But there, some people'll believe anything."

There was, of course, no bathroom. The most childish optimist had stopped short of hoping for that. Nor was there any water-supply save a well at the back, in which countless rats had no doubt committed suicide. The rooms, most of which were panelled in dark oak, were vast, ill-lit, and exhaled a damp, vault-like aroma. The

scullery was the only apartment in which I could imagine myself being comfortable. My guide almost apologised for the absence of cockroaches, but explained that they would doubtless return in large numbers as soon as the house was occupied, since they were "terrible knowin' 'uns."

But I set my teeth. I determined that if my dream were to die, it should die hard. I persuaded myself that when certain moneys, now easily raised, had been spent on the place, it would become one of the jolliest houses in England. I told myself, poor fool that I was, that Margaret should fall lastingly in love with it at first sight, and find joy in the lonely marshes, the wind's song, and the passing of "beautiful slow time."

I stamped about the house, interrupting rat fights and heedless of the alarm I gave to spiders, deciding upon this and that improvement, venturing into upper rooms where my informant dared not set foot, owing to the dry-rot and his having a wife and family. How anything dry, even dry-rot, ever got into that house, baffles me to this day. I then dismissed the mirth-maker just as he was in the middle of telling me how the previous outbreak of diphtheria had been practically traced to my property, and went forth to inspect the marshes which were mine. Among other privileges I owned the riparian rights of both banks of a mile of stream, in which not even the oldest inhabitant could remember to have seen any fish.

The country was entirely flat and bare save for windmills, and of these there must have been seven or eight in sight. Don Quixote, had he been with me, would have turned dizzy through wondering which one to go for first. I turned my steps towards one very provocative fellow, who was making insolent gestures at me from a safe distance, because I understood that he marked a corner boundary of my land.

The fields were rightly called marshes. It had been reasonably dry of late, but every step sounded like a hearty kiss. The whole expanse of country was crossed and criss-crossed by dykes, broad and narrow, with and without duckweed. These were bridged by loose boards which threatened to turn over—and doubtless often did—when one trod on them.

I was making my way along a footpath beside one of these dykes, when I became aware for the first time that I had not the whole landscape to myself. An elderly parson was approaching from my flank, evidently with the intention of crossing the same plank as the one I had in view. I lingered a little, assuming that he was the Vicar, and telling myself that this would be a good opportunity to make his acquaintance. Well for him that the thought occurred to me.

Some red cattle were grazing in the immediate vicinity, and one, lifting his head, followed the Vicar's movements with great curiosity. As curiosity grew stronger, he broke into a gentle trot in the wake of the reverend gentleman.

As yet I scented no danger. I was not nervous of cattle—then. I had not even determined the sex of the beast, but I had often seen cattle take a perfectly friendly interest in strangers. All unaware of his peril, the clergyman suddenly produced with a flourish an enormous red handkerchief and blew his nose with a great heartiness.

In spite of one of our bards, the female of the species is not always more deadly than the male. A cow would have overlooked the insult, a bull never. Down went his head and up went his tail. From his muzzle came a noise similar to that made by a colonel criticising the "Present arms!" of his battalion. The clergyman gave one glance behind him, and then broke into a tottery run.

Modesty forbids my giving too detailed an account of my gallantry, although my natural inclination is to linger a while over this pleasing topic. I was quick on my feet, and I had never thought too highly of the exponents of the Spanish national game. By dancing and shouting I managed to induce the bull to believe that I was even more hateful than the first object of his enmity. He came for me, and must have ricked his neck the moment after I side-stepped him.

The parson had nearly reached the plank by now. I dodged the bull again and then ran for it, judging myself capable of jumping the dyke. I was, nearly. The mud in which I landed was something less than knee-deep, and if it caused me to hold my head high until I had changed my clothes, one cannot, after all, expect ditches to be flavoured with night-scented stock. The clerical gentleman whom I had rescued came and helped me up, and together we shook our fists at the bull, who roared threats and insults from the other side of the dyke.



"But it was Margaret who . . . rushed out to fall upon the

"My dear sir, how can I thank you?" he said presently. (It was the Vicar speaking, of course, not the bull.) "But for you, I really don't know what would have happened." I did. "There is no doubt at all that I owe my life to you." He beamed gratitude. "Bailey has no right to allow a savage beast like that to run loose."

"Bailey is going to hear from me about it," I said, vaguely wondering if a landlord had any right to object to being chivvied by his tenant's cattle. It was my first day at the game, and I knew very few of the rules.

The Vicar shook his fist once more at the bull. Had I been a poster artist, I had doubtless made use of the incident to advertise a meat extract. The blue sky, the red bull, the windmills, and the jolly-looking old parson would have appeared very well on the hoardings. Doubtless he recognised in my voice the proud proprietorial tone, for he turned to me at once.

"You're not Mr. Yardley, surely?"

"I am. May I ask if you are the Vicar?"



Vicar's neck. He called her Meg, and she called him Daddy."

"You may, my dear sir, and I am; and believe me when I say how very deeply grateful——"

I tried to stop him several times, but it was no use. When people insist on being grateful, nothing short of a gag is of the least avail. Besides, it did me good to feel really heroic. By the time he had half done, the Vicar made me feel like a combination of Casabianca, Carpentier, and the man who went to dinner at the duchess's place in tweeds.

We walked together. He asked me if I intended to live at the Manor House. I told him it depended. Then I grew confidential. After all, if one can't take his Vicar into his confidence, whom can he?

"I'm a poor man," I said. "I am thinking of getting married, if I can induce a certain lady to live here. Now, you know all about this part of the world? Do you think one could live quietly and in reasonable comfort on fourteen hundred a year?"

He looked at me as if I had said fourteen millions or fourteen shillings.

"Fourteen hundred!" he repeated, with a little gasp.

Not knowing whether he thought it much or little, I held my peace.

"I have lived here many years," he continued, after a little pause; "I have a wife and I have had six children. My two boys both went to public schools. Of course my family was nearly grown-up by the time the cost of living reached its present height, but my annual income has never exceeded five hundred pounds."

I could have wrung his hand.

"And," I cried, "if I dare say it, sir, I should like to wager that you've been very happy."

"Of course! Of course I have!" He gave me a great broad smile. "I have had my financial difficulties, and felt none the worse for them. Yes, on the whole, I have been a happy man, Mr. Yardley."

I am afraid I turned sulky at the thought of Margaret. In some such home as that, I knew she had been reared. What right had she to speak of "abject poverty" on fourteen hundred a year? It was little enough by some standards, but by hers it should have been sufficient.

Still, I was not afraid to set her upon a pedestal, to love her for what I believed she was. The real gold was there under the tinsel. She wore the tinsel for some absurd affectation, which I, perhaps because I was a man, could not understand. Sometimes she had been almost pathetically anxious for me not to think too highly of her: and what but innate honesty was at the back of that? My heart melted, and I laughed suddenly at my thoughts. This child to pose for a *blasée* woman of the world!

I turned to the Vicar suddenly. A great idea had occurred to me. I cannot call myself a brilliant man—although I am only partly offended when others suggest that I am—but I do think of things sometimes.

"Would you do me a great favour, if I asked it?"

"My dear Mr. Yardley, after what you have done for me——"

"Would you tell a certain lady that life here was possible and pleasant on very little? It's rather a lot to ask—to expect you to blurt out your private affairs—but it means a lot to me. I shall bring her here to see the house when it looks a bit less like 'The Mystery of the Haunted Grange.' You see, if she hears what you've told me, from your own lips, and you enlarge a bit on having always been comfortable and happy, it might make a difference. I wish you'd had thirteen children and three hundred a year. That would have sounded really convincing."

"*I* don't," said the Vicar, with a smile.

"Ah, and being a vicar, of course, you can't very well exaggerate a little. Never mind, the sober truth will have to do."

He still looked puzzled.

"Would you mind telling me," he said, with a patient smile, "exactly what you do want of me?"

"You see," I explained, "the lady I want to marry thinks it would bore her to live in the country. I want somebody who lives here—and who better than the Vicar?—to convince her that life in this neighbourhood is one grand sweet song. I also want it to be thrust upon her that life in the country can be made tolerable even to people who are not millionaires. When she comes to see the house, I want you to come to tea. We will talk about the high cost of living, and that will give you your lead."

"My dear Mr. Yardley," said the Vicar, "I shall be only too happy."

III.

It took a long time to get the house in order and have furniture sent down to it. I paid one fleeting visit to it when it was alleged to be ready for human habitation. It looked better than it had, indeed, and I felt a sneaking liking for the sad old place. But even then my heart sank at the thought of Margaret's verdict.

On my return to Town, after my first visit, I had refused to discuss the house with her. I had not even told her where it was.

"When it is ready," I said, "I will motor you over, and you shall see it for yourself. I'll let it be a surprise. Meanwhile we won't even mention it, as it seems certain to lead up to a quarrel."

"Is it in Norfolk or Suffolk?" she asked. "You might at least tell me that."

"Not another hint. Whichever I said, you'd promptly say it was the worse county of the two. You come from Norfolk, don't you?"

"I do, Jimmy, and if I should marry you in a weak moment, I hope your house is in Suffolk. You can't imagine the loneliness of the scenes of my childhood. The damp, the cold, the dreadful east winds, Jimmy! And the bird-cries at night! There was one kind of bird which used to make a noise

like a child being strangled by a telephone operator——"

"Why a telephone operator?"

"Because they'd be slow over anything, even strangling. A long-drawn-out scream it was. And if I had to sit alone at night, and you didn't happen to be there—oh, Jimmy, I couldn't bear it!"

I had not heard that particular bird-cry, nor did I know the bird, but I had little doubt that there would be specimens within hail.

"Cheer up," I said. "There are plenty of snipe, and they're cheerful enough to listen to—like a bluebottle trying to imitate a sheep."

It happened that Margaret's fortnight's holiday—the kindly management of the never-ending musical comedy allowed her one—coincided with the time when the house was ready. I wrote to the Vicar, whose name I had forgotten to inquire, begging him to come to tea on the Saturday. I selected a kindly aunt, willing to be imposed upon for the purposes of propriety, and at an early hour on the Saturday morning started to drive them up to Norfolk.

At about four o'clock, when we were still ten miles from our destination, the countryside grew familiar to Margaret, and she made repeated inquiries as to the village and how much farther we had to go. But I would tell her nothing. A new dread laid hold on me. I knew that she was not on good terms with her people, and if the house were too near them, it might put it still further out of court. When at last I turned up the weedy drive, she began to laugh hysterically, and seized my arm, thereby nearly sending us into the hedge.

The house looked better than it had when I first saw it, but it seemed drearier than ever because of my forebodings. Margaret was laughing hysterically as I helped her out. It was as if she were saying: "Is *this* the place you expect me to live in?"

The one retainer I had so far contrived to hire opened the door to us and made us welcome. My aunt, who loves old houses and is not without tact, went off immediately by herself on a tour of exploration, and Margaret and I together went into the dining-room. She was still laughing, but there was a sort of shakiness about her I could not understand. She turned suddenly and put her hand on my arm.

"Oh, Jimmy, I've been a beast to you! You've been building up such dreams about this room! You've been"—her queer mirthless laughter increased—"picturing me sitting of a night here, over the fire which won't burn because of a defective chimney, reading 'Wuthering Heights,' while the wind is trying to lift the roof. Yes, I know all about that chimney. I've played in this room as a child."

"You—what?"

"Some friends of ours took this house furnished for the summer when I was a very little girl. You've brought me back into my own country, Jimmy."

I drew a long breath.

"Listen, dear," I said. "Don't be prejudiced against the house. I didn't think such a lot of it when I first saw it. But it—it grows on one. When we're here together, it'll be the jolliest house in the world. And—and we shan't be really hard up. We can have a great time on what we've got. Why, the Vicar here told me himself that he never had more than five hundred a year, and he brought up umpteen kids, and never went short of anything himself."

"The Vicar?"

"Yes. He told me he'd had a perfectly topping life here. But he's coming to tea, and he'll tell you all about it. But perhaps you knew——"

She seemed to sway a little, and caught the table with one hand.

"The Vicar! Coming to tea!"

I heard a step on the drive, and looked through the window.

"He's here now. You'd better run and find Aunt Helen, and I'll go and let him in."

But it was Margaret who opened the door, and who pushed past me and rushed out to fall upon the Vicar's neck. He called her Meg, and she called him Daddy, and I—— But it was no place for me, and I went to hide in the morning-room. But as I was going I heard:

"Oh, Daddy, he's just been saying how you brought all of us up, and never went short of anything yourself! Oh, Daddy, as if I didn't *know!*"

* * * * *

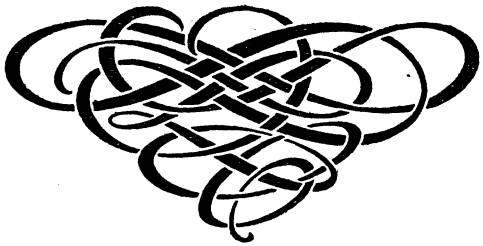
There is nothing singular about much of this narrative. Many a girl from a country parsonage has gone on the stage without the consent of her father, and some have returned. To nearly all of them the call of London is the loud clear call, but there have been cases—and this was one—when the call of home, heard unawares, was irresistible.

My last word is for the benefit of all those

who think they understand women. An hour later I was conducting a tour of the house, and Margaret was rhapsodising over every room, when, in an attic, we came upon a troupe of fat and repulsive spiders doing a sort of trapeze act on their respective threads.

A short while ago she would have shrieked at the sight of them, but now—

"Oh, aren't they *darlings?*" she cried.



THE TREE OF WONDER.

TWENTY times and twenty times
Round the Tree we went.
Marie found a wondrous gem,
And Jane a pixie-tent;
Peter found a whistling-bell,
And George a sign-o'-three;
But I it was who found a spell
To make a cherry-tree.

Gaffer-Dick-Live-All-Alone,
Him that's small and bent,
Says that gem is just a stone,
And a toadstool not a tent;
Old sheep-bells are easy found—
So he says—and who
Would treasure clovers from the ground
And a cherry-stone or two?

Twenty times and twenty times
Round the Tree we went;
Gaffer-Dick-Live-All-Alone,
Him that's small and bent,
Cannot tell what tree to choose,
The right way round as well;
Though he knows how to make horse-shoes,
He'll never find a spell!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

THE RESOURCES OF CIVILISATION

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

FROM the city of the Great King to the city of Bubujala is a day and a night's journey, but Balaba, sometime the Old King's servant, made the journey in a night, and fell, smothered with dust and half dead with thirst, at the feet of Fomba, paramount chief of all the Bubujala people. Fomba was sitting in his palaver house amidst his counsellors and headmen when the messenger staggered from the edge of the forest and wearily climbed the hill on which the palaver house was situated.

"O Balaba," said Fomba shakily, "what lies do they tell of me to the Great King?"

He had reason for apprehension, it seemed, and when the breathless messenger did not reply—for in truth he could do nothing but pant—he went on:

"All my people here know that I have lived very humbly in the king's sight. I have sent him my gum and my rubber to the last load, and if any man says that I have spoken against him, I will sew a snake in his mouth."

By this time Balaba had recovered his voice.

"Lord," he said hollowly, "the king is dead!"

"Waa!" gasped Fomba, and sat down heavily.

"The night before the night there came two white men and some soldiers," said Balaba rapidly, "and another white man sat in his great canoe, which makes a noise like a devil, and the two came bearing a ju-ju of great strength, and this they placed before the Old King."

"Did the Old King chop them?" asked Fomba, interested.

"No, lord, he did not chop them, because they had in their hands the little guns that say 'ha, ha!'"

Fomba of the Bubujala looked at his counsellors, scrutinising each face.

"The Great King is dead," he said softly. "O ko! And these white men killed him, and you chopped them quickly?"

"No, lord, we did not chop them, for the white men had gone away, taking with them two people—the chief of the Ochori and his woman—before the killing order came, for the Old King was afraid of the little guns which the white men carried. But when they had gone off, he sent his fine regiments to cut them away from the river; also he sent his women away, that being his custom when he made a war palaver."

Fomba nodded impatiently as the man stopped to take breath.

"Lord," Balaba went on impressively, "these men brought a powerful ju-ju with a terrible face, and this they gave to the king, saying that it would be good for him, and when they had gone, running swiftly, it was the order of the king that the gift should be burnt."

His voice faltered.

"Lord," he said in a hushed voice, "who knows what great ju-ju these white men brought? For no sooner had the king put this shame upon them, casting it into the fire, when lightning struck with a terrible noise, and many of the king's guard were thrown down and killed, and all the king's big huts were swept away by a mighty wind, and the houses also on the hills, so that there is nothing in Rimi-Rimi but leaning walls without roofs."

He did not explain that the powerful ju-ju had been an aeroplane bomb which Mr.

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Administrator Sanders had brought all the way from London, that the terrifying face had been created and painted and its steel legs riveted by an enthusiastic officer at the War Office, because this he did not know. The chief stood in dismayed silence.

"O ko!" he said. "This is bad news, Balaba, for if the white men have come, and they have a ju-ju so powerful——"

"Lord," said the man eagerly, "where he stood, and where the fire was, there is now nothing but a great hole in the ground in which twenty men could lie."

The chief shook his head and thought long, for he was a cunning man, though no great warrior.

"What of Masaga, the king's son—did he die also?"

"Lord, no," said the man. And then, standing first on one bare foot and then upon the other, to evidence his embarrassment, he blurted forth: "Lord, who is king now of all these people? I think it is you, for the king's son is a fool."

Again a silence long and, for the messenger, ominous.

"Go, Balaba, to my hut," Fomba said. "But tell me first—what of the white men, and where are they now?"

Balaba was dusting his hands in proof that his mission was done, a custom of the folk of Bubujala.

"The soldiers sit in two deep ditches near the landing-place, and before them they have made a fence of wire which is filled with sharp and evil pins," he said; "also they have many guns of great size, and the people, who are afraid of them, do not go near them."

Fomba nodded his head.

"Go to my hut, Balaba," he said kindly enough, and the man trotted off.

The chief waited until he was out of hearing, and then turned to his own hunter.

"Go, follow Balaba and chop him down," he said. "Let no man hear him speak, for it is good that the city should not know the truth, if he spoke the truth. And if he spoke a lie, then I go to our lord and say that I killed him because of his wickedness."

The hunter slipped silently in the trail of the unconscious messenger, and in full view of the city and of the counsellors upon the hill he struck Balaba down, and Balaba went to his death, not knowing how.

All these things Sanders heard later. For the moment he was less engrossed in the tragedy which was occurring in the depths of the forest than in the prospect of tragedy nearer at hand. He sat under the white awning of the *Zaire II.* and sipped a cup of cold coffee, his eyes never leaving the landing-place, where forty Houssas overawed the fifty or sixty thousand people of Rimi-Rimi.

The Great King's own territory, and that of which for hundreds of years his family had been titular kings, was bounded on two of its sides by the river, which here took a wide bend. Rimi-Rimi and the country about was set upon a plateau, the bluffs of which fell steeply to the water and presented no accessible or scalable point, save at the landing-spot opposite which the *Zaire* was anchored. Here the uncompromising level line of the cliffs sloped into an obtuse V.

Before him squatted one N'kama, and this philosophical prisoner, though there were handcuffs about his wrists, was a small chief whom Sanders had noted, on the night of his arrival, as being of the king's suite.

Sanders brought his eyes back from the two posts which were held by Hamilton and Bones, and stared coldly down at the hunched figure at his feet.

"N'kama," he said, and he spoke in the language of the Upper Bomongo, "for twelve hours you have been on board my fine ship, and though all men say you are a great talker, yet you have told me nothing."

"Lord," said N'kama, shifting a little uneasily under the gaze, "I do not think that you will go alive from this country; but if I speak to you of the great secrets of my people, I shall die most surely, and my skin will hang where the white man's skin was hanging when my lord took it down and put it in a hole in the ground, saying certain mysteries from a book."

"O ko," said Sanders softly. "Then it seems, N'kama, that you are worse off than I, for I may yet escape; but it is certain that you are a dead man unless you speak to me, and you are as surely a dead man if you do! Now, I think they will kill you more painlessly upon the land than I shall, for I shall hang you up by the heels on two sharp hooks, and I will light a little fire under your head."

The involuntary grimace on the prisoner's face told that the threat had been duly appreciated.

N'kama was silent, and when he did speak, it was to recall some of the legendry which was associated with Sanders's name.

"I have heard of you, lord, from Akasava prisoners we have taken, and they say you

are most cruel, and that you have no pity in your stomach. Often I have heard the drums of the Lesser People speaking of your wickedness. The prisoners said you were dead, but now it seems you are alive, and my heart is full of sorrow."

Sanders did not smile. There were times when he doubted if he would ever smile again, and there was reason for his doubt, could he but foretell the future.

"You shall speak," he said.

"Lord, I cannot speak," said the man, "and I wish to go back to my house, for I have a wife who is very sick. Also I would not be here," he added naïvely, "but that one of your soldiers hit me on the head and then stuck me in the back with his spear."

Sanders knew the value of those intervals of silence which mean so much in native palavers, and resumed his scrutiny of the beach. Two nights before, in the confusion occasioned by the explosion, he and his companions had not only made their way through a panic-stricken people, but in the night he had established a bridge-head which served the double purpose of covering the Old King's city and maintaining the inviolability of his steamer, for the canoes of Rimi-Rimi were beached to the left and right of the gap.

"Sandi," said N'kama, having apparently digested the situation, "what can I tell you that you, so wise and wonderful, and Bosambo, the chief of the Little People, who is more cunning than ghosts, do not know?"

"First you shall tell me about the white man who came here five and five moons ago."

"Lord," said the other frankly, "there is nothing to tell, for he came and was chopped by the Old King's hand, and we had a great feast, and hung his skin upon the trees, as is the custom, for we people are very proud, and do not like the white man who is neither white nor black, and for this reason the Devil Woman of Limbi, who is very holy and a woman of great mystery, even she spoke death for white people in the days of Fergisi."

"Fergisi?" asked Sanders, with a frown.

"He was white also," nodded N'kama, "and a God-man; also his woman, she also was white, and the small woman was white, having hair which was very ugly, being the colour of corn."

Sanders sat up. In the excitement of the past days he had forgotten the murdered missionary and the horror of his daughter's fate.

"How did they die?" he asked softly.

"Lord, I do not know," said the man, "for I was hunting. But the Devil Woman of Limbi came to the king and spoke for his life, and it was a terrible happening, for the old Devil Woman has never left the mountains for twenty years; but because she hates white people, the king's guard came upon the house of the God-man and slew his small woman. But his own woman ran away in a little *puc-a-puc*, and it is said that she died in the swift waters."

"And what of Fergisi?" asked Sanders.

"Him they took to Limbi, where the old and holy woman lived, and she put her sword under his chin and cut his throat."

He said this so calmly and in so matter-of-fact a tone, as though he had been discussing some amusing social event, and Sanders, despite his experience, shivered.

"Who is this woman of Limbi?" he asked.

The man looked right and left and lowered his voice.

"Lord, she is older than the gods and the ju-jus, and wiser than the great ones of the mountains. They say she has lived a thousand years, and buried her own mother under Limbi, piling up the rocks upon her until they reached the sky. Lord, she is terrible," he said earnestly, "and all men fear her."

He spat left and right in propitiation.

"Therefore I say, lord, that you will never leave this country, because she sends her *tchu* to guard our people."

"*Tchu!*" repeated Sanders, with a puzzled expression, for this was a new word to him.

"Lord, *tchu* is a ghost who walks so that none see him."

"Where may I see this terrible woman?" asked Sanders.

"She will come," was the surprising reply.

"She will come?" repeated Sanders. "O man, I do not understand you."

"Lord, she must come when we make the new king, for she alone knows the mysteries. It is said that she made the Old King, whom your lordship made to vanish, and all men know that he was older than the hills."

"So she will come, will she?" said Sanders gently, and beckoned the sentry. "Take this man below, Ahmed," he said. "Let none speak to him on your life."

"On my head and my soul," said the Houssa conventionally, and led the passive captive away.

Later in the morning Sanders withdrew his posts from the shore. His force was too

small to split, and Fomba might come in considerable strength. When they sat at tiffin on the after-deck of the *Zaire,* Sanders related his talk with the man.

"Who is this woman, anyway, and where is Limbi?" asked Hamilton.

"I rather suspect it is the native's word for Mount Limpisi, and if that is the case, it must be the mountain we can see, or we saw as we were coming up the river."

Bones, who had come aboard hungry, had in consequence kept silence; but now he rolled his table napkin briskly and smirked, and Hamilton, seeing the smirk, groaned.

"Bones has got a suggestion, sir," he said in despair.

"Dear old Ham is unusually right," said Bones, smacking his lips. "It's one of the grandest little ideas, sir, that's ever penetrated my jolly old noddle. *In re* Devil Lady, why not chop off her naughty old head?"

Sanders looked up.

"You can't kill a woman in cold blood," he said. "Besides, she might take it into her head to help us along. You never know. One hates to miss any opportunity," he said half to himself. "But I can't reconcile my conscience to what might be a senseless assassination. If she gives trouble, and if she does instigate the people against us, that is another matter."

His smile was unpleasant, and Patricia Sanders would never have recognised the quiet, soft-spoken man who picked caterpillars off his roses with tweezers in this hard-featured arbiter of Fate.

"What we have to expect," he said, "is for the various territories that make up this kingdom to start warring with one another, because I rather think there are about a dozen rival claimants to the throne. There's Lubolama, chief of the Fongini; there is Fomba, chief of the Bubujala; there is the chief of Kasala and friend Kabalaka, who, I suspect, is not without his hopes of succeeding—he was a cousin of the king."

"Who wasn't?" said Bones. "Who wasn't, dear old sir and Excellency? And perhaps this naughty old lady, the girl of the Limbi lost—if you will pardon the jest—perhaps she's his aunt. You never know. Why, I remember a dear old friend of mine——"

"Let us confine ourselves to local barbarians, Bones, if you don't mind," said Hamilton wearily.

"Rude, Ham, rude!" murmured Bones, shaking his head. "Rude, old officer, very rude indeed, deuced rude!"

"Well, there we are," said Sanders, leaning back in his chair with a wry face. "Six months we have to settle this territory, and I rather fancy that we are going to be very fully occupied."

It was two days later that the first of the claimants came upon the scene, and never was there a claimant less aggressive, more respectful, more frank and considerate in his attitude to all the world than Fomba, chief of the Bubujala. They saw him come in the dawn, twenty-four canoes that came down the river six abreast and keeping perfect line, and the whole crew and company of the *Zaire* stood to arms, anticipating an attack. But the canoes swept round the bend and made for the shore, and at ten o'clock that morning Fomba presented himself on the ship.

He was a big man, broad of shoulder and inclined to rotundity. His cheeks were round and his eyes and expression intelligent. Unerringly he came straight to Sanders and saluted in the fashion of the territory.

"Lord, I see you," he said.

"I see you, Fomba," said Sanders, who had had tidings of the visitor.

"Lord, I come with peace in my heart," said Fomba, "and I bring you salt."

He turned to a waiting servant who carried a bowl, and scooped up a great heap in his two palms. He offered it to Sanders, who wetted his finger-tips, touched the salt and tasted it, an action which the guest imitated.

"Lord, I have come a long journey to see you," said Fomba, "though my heart is heavy because of my cousin and my nearest relation. He has been smitten by your great ju-ju."

Sanders's eyes never left the man's face.

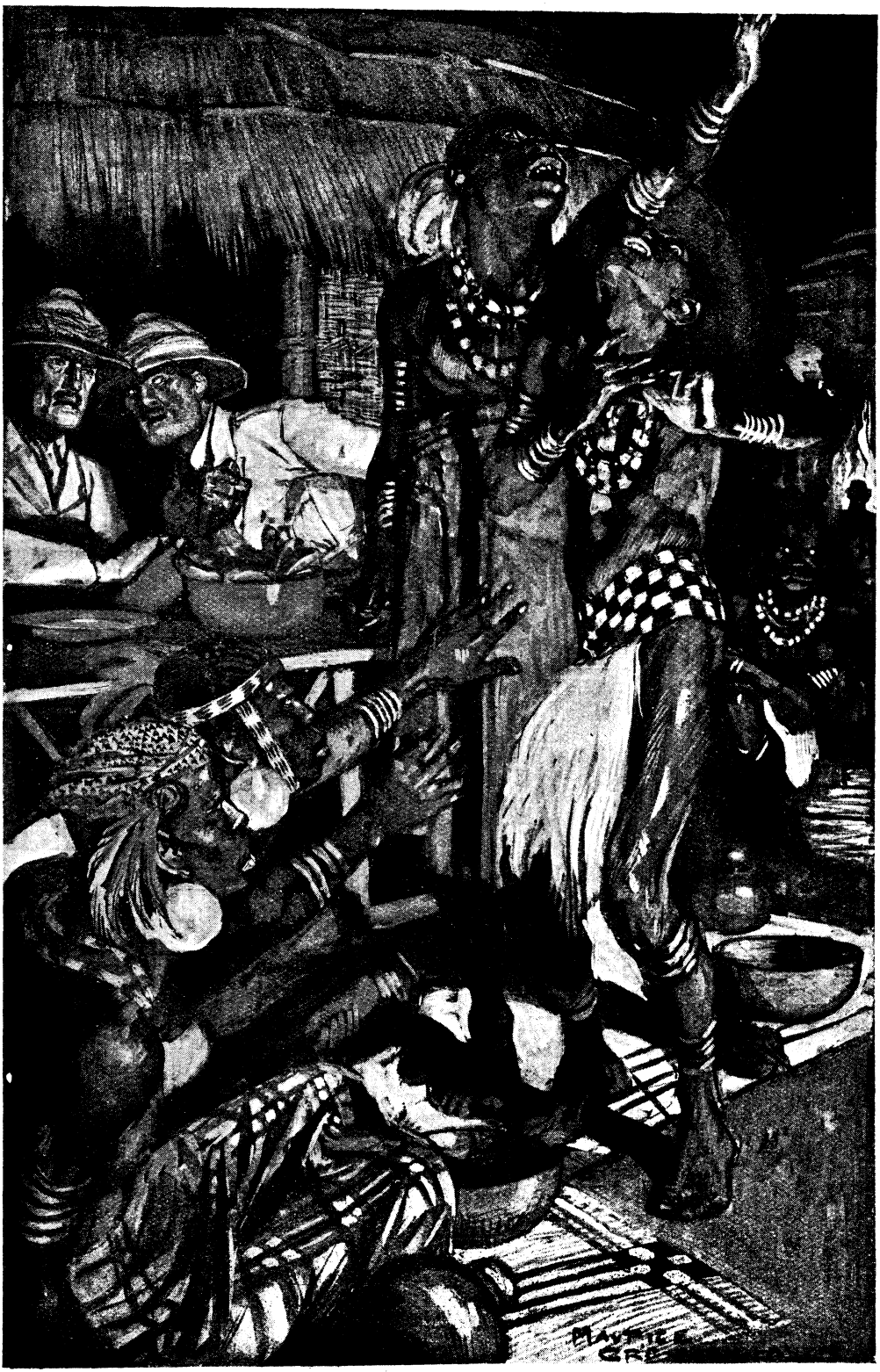
"It is good that you should come, Fomba," he said. "I know that your stomach is sorrowful because the Old King is in hell, but you tell me news when you say you are his nearest relation, for is there not a son?"

"Lord, that son is mad and silly, as every man knows," said Fomba eagerly.

"And is there not a brother, Lubolama, and yet another cousin? I do not dwell in this country, and yet my spies bring me news, and I have heard these things."

"Who knows his father, and are not uncles as many as goats?" quoth Fomba easily. "And who shall say how nearer one person is than another? Yet it seems to me, lord, that I who am here am nearer than they who are far."

"You cannot measure right with a



"He stood for a moment unsteadily, and then, with a shriek, doubled up and fell to the ground."

'string," said Sanders, giving proverb for proverb. "Now, I tell you this, Fomba, that I am not strong for you. For if I set you up in the king's place, all manner of men will hate you, such as Kabalaka and Lubolama and the many sons of the Old King. Also there is a certain son of the king's second wife who sits with the evil men of the Bad Village."

Fomba looked from Sanders to the shore, and back to Sanders again.

"Lord, why do you come to these lands?" he asked bluntly.

"To bring the law," said Sanders.

Now, in the Bomongo language there is only one word for "law" and "power," and for unbiassed "justice" there is no other word than "vengeance." So for "law" Sanders used the word *lobala*, which means "right" as distinct from "wrong."

Fomba was frankly puzzled. "Lord, what is right?" he said. "What you do, or what I do? When two nations are warring, is he not right who has the most spears and the bravest young men?"

Sanders hid a smile. It was queer to hear the paraphrase of Napoleon's dictum that Providence was on the side of the big battalions from the lips of an untutored savage.

"What is right, lord?" repeated Fomba.

Sanders had need to go back to old Rome and quote as best he could the greatest of jurists.

"This is right, Fomba," he said—"to keep faith, to harm none, and to give every man his due."

This Fomba pondered.

"Lord, how can a man keep faith and harm none?" he asked. "For if I keep faith with the king's sons, I harm myself, and if I give Masaga his due, then I rob myself of mine."

Sanders watched the canoe in which Fomba left for the shore with a stony face.

"That man is going to give us trouble, Hamilton," he said, turning to his lieutenant.

"Why not set him up?" asked Hamilton quietly.

Sanders was rubbing his chin—a sure sign of worry.

"The Old King named his son before the great council of the land," he said. "The traditions here are much stronger than in those old territories of ours, Hamilton, or I'd retire his majesty like a shot. But to do that now means to bring the whole of the council against me; for whatever might be the individual ambitions of the chiefs, and although they all separately may desire the throne, yet it is certain that if I put one of them up, I should have the others in arms against me, and probably a rising here in Rimi-Rimi itself. We are facing problems now which we've never met," he said seriously. "The sooner we get Masaga crowned or anointed, the better for all concerned."

"When does the Devil Lady make a dramatic appearance?" asked Hamilton.

"Not before a week," said Sanders. "She, apparently, is the custodian of the insignia, whatever it may be."

"A week?" said Hamilton. "Anything may happen in a week."

What did happen seemed the most innocent of all possible occurrences. Fomba gave a great feast in honour of his kinsman and sovereign. It was to be a feast of a thousand pots.

"That's a new idea, though the N'gombi people have some similar method," said Hamilton, bringing the news. "Every family brings its own fire and its own cooking-pot, and the philanthropic Fomba provides its contents. And Fomba desires that we should join the royal circle."

"I think not," said Sanders decidedly. "I draw the line at native meals."

"I conveyed that fact to his nibs," said Hamilton. "Really, he is the most adaptable man. He said we may all dine in the white style, and be of the royal circle, though not in it."

"A rum bird," said Sanders thoughtfully. "I'll think it over."

It was decided that Hamilton should go alone to the feast, but at the eleventh hour Sanders changed his plan.

"Bones," he said, "I'm going off with Hamilton. Keep a searchlight on the beach, and let the men stand to arms."

Bones wagged his head disapprovingly, for he had given the feast much more thought than Sanders could have imagined. He had even planned a rescue, and had spent an hour in his store cabin collecting certain articles for use in case of emergency. He could do this without exciting the derision of Hamilton, because he was in charge of the ship's stores.

"You will pardon, dear old Excellency and sir, any suggestion of interference, but diplomacy being my long suit, as dear old Ham jolly well knows——"

"As I jolly well don't know," interrupted Hamilton. "But continue your modest narrative."

"My point is this, dear old thing," said Bones. "The whole of this feast business may be a trap. The naughty old fat one may be working out a stunt——"

"I don't think so, Bones," said Sanders. "I've thought that, too. I can't exactly see what Fomba could do, for the people would be with the king, and for the moment, at any rate, the little fellow's with me."

Bones shrugged his shoulders.

"Dear old Excellency, I have my idea. I've worked it out, and maybe you won't despise poor old Bones when his mind gets working," he said, resigned. "The only point that now interests me is: Do I get my jolly old bath to-night? My dear old Excellency, if you could see my back——"

"I don't want to see your back," said Sanders hastily. "But there's no reason why you shouldn't have your bath whilst I'm ashore. Abiboo is quite reliable, and will probably keep as good a watch as you."

"And better," said Hamilton, *sotto voce*.

Bones bowed.

The feast seemed to be the most innocuous function. The rising ground beyond the village was covered with the alfresco diners, and the light of their fires threw a red glow on the low-lying clouds which were rolling down from the mountains. A rude table had been made for the two white men and put against the king's hut, and their own orderlies had spread a make-belief meal. The royal circle, consisting of the king, Fomba, Kabalaka, and two small chiefs, was so close to Sanders's feet that he could have kicked the nearest diner.

Sanders was alert and watchful, and his eyes roamed from side to side.

"This love and harmony is just a little bit too good to be true," he said. "There's a queer little feeling in my spine which is due either to old age or to nerves."

"It isn't old age," said Hamilton in a low voice. "I have that feeling, too. Did you give Bones any warning?"

Sanders nodded.

"I told him, if he heard a shot, to get half the men ashore and to storm the city, regardless of consequences."

"I'm afraid that would be very little use to us," said Hamilton drily.

"O people!"

It was Fomba who had leapt erect.

"See Masaga, the king!"

The youth who squatted at his side strained his head up to look over the fire, and leered round with his silly smile.

"Behold the son of the Great One!" roared Fomba.

Back came the chorus in a thunderous sound.

"All the people of the world are dogs to the king."

Masaga chuckled and drank from the gourd by his side.

"Let all people know that I love Masaga," cried Fomba, "and that I will stand before him in the face of the white witches who are his enemies!"

He swung round and glared at Sanders.

"Fomba," said Sanders, and his voice was hard, and cut through the babble of sound like a knife, "I think there will be weeping in your hut this night."

"Look, look!" whispered Hamilton hoarsely. "Look at Masaga!"

The young king was getting to his feet like a drunken man. His face was convulsed with pain, and his eyes were staring wildly. He stood for a moment unsteadily, and then, with a shriek, doubled up and fell to the ground. That was the moment which Fomba chose. With a leap he had sprung away from the fire and had doubled between the fires of the feasters, and was lost, if not to sight, at least to range.

Presently they heard his voice. "The king is dead!" they heard him shriek. "The white men slew him with their magic!"

"Into the hut!" said Sanders, and shot down the first warrior who sprang at him. A second fell dead across the threshold.

"This," said Sanders, as he waved the smoke out of the hut, "this is the promised stunt."

Captain Tibbetts was in his bath, and was cheerfully dabbing the little red marks on his body with an ammonia-filled sponge. His face was contorted to the grimace appropriate to the use of strong ammonia.

"Blink, blank!" said Bones, choking at the fumes of the remedy. "Dash these naughty old flies! I——" And then he heard a shot.

Before he could rise, the door of the bath-room opened cautiously and a man stood in the doorway. He was a stranger, and Bones did not have to consider how he came to the ship, for his skin glistened with water and his loin-cloth was dripping. Nor was his business a mystery, for he held in his hand a short broad knife.

"O white man," he said, "this is the end!"

So far he got, when a large sponge, well soaked in liquid ammonia, struck him in the face. He took one breath and fell into something which was remarkably like a fit. Bones stopped only long enough to pick up the knife, and raced along the narrow alleyway to his cabin. A few seconds later he appeared on the deck, clad only in his pyjama trousers, and he carried under one arm a long black cylinder, and in his hand he gripped what appeared to be three haversacks.

"O Abiboo," he called, "there is a man in my bathroom. Take your long bayonet to him. Hold the ship with half the men, and send the rest ashore after me."

He leapt into the launch, which Sanders had sent back from the shore, and set its engines going. The warriors whom Fomba had put on the beach to resist any landing from the ship were prepared for all manner of enemies, but they had not counted on ghosts —not a half-naked white ghost, with a black face and two enormous staring eyes that glittered in the light of the fires. They gave way before the racing figure, and Bones flew between the fires, his bare feet burnt with the scattered embers, and drove straight into the crowd that stood before the hut of the chief.

"Come out, white man!" cried Fomba exultantly. "Come out and show us what is right and what is law. I, Fomba of Bubujala, call you."

And then a body was launched against him. He had a glimpse of a white back as it vanished into the hut.

"The resources of civilisation, dear old thing," said Bones hollowly through his mask. "There is one on you, dear old Ham. Trust old Bones in an emergency."

"What have you got? Good Heavens!" said Sanders in a hushed voice. "I never thought I should want to use that!"

There was a hissing sound from the cylinder, and he put on his mask. Those outside the door saw a thick yellow cloud of smoke rolling out.

"They have fired the hut," said Fomba. And then one of the men dropped as if he had been shot, then another, and Fomba turned and fled.

The Houssas caught him on the beach as he was making for his canoe.

The next morning Sanders called a palaver of the city, and the one undamaged war-drum of the Old King rolled out its summons. And there, before all the people, Fomba, chief of the Bubujala, came face to face with a slim figure in white who sat upon a camp-stool.

"Fomba," he said, "you ask me what is law, and I tell you that it is my will that no man should harm another. You ask me what right is, and I tell you that it is right that you should die and wrong that you should live; for by your living you brought death to your kinsman, whom you poisoned, and death to those who followed you, and by your dying no man shall take hurt from you."

"Lord, these things are too lofty for me," said Fomba.

"You will see the matter more clearly from the top of that high tree," said Sanders unpleasantly.

And they hanged him from the highest branch of the highest tree on the highest hill in the city of Rimi-Rimi.

The fourth story in this series will appear in the next number.



PARADE OF THE MOROS IN THE STREETS OF JIJONA AT THE FESTIVAL OF ST. SEBASTIAN.

A SPANISH FIESTA

By JAN GORDON

"WHAT luck!" exclaimed they as we arrived, hot, dusty, and jarred by a sixteen-mile drive in a motor-lorry over a route which the motor guide describes as "cartroad, bad and very sickly." "What luck! You have arrived just in time for the *fiesta*."

They promised us a week of diversion in the beautiful mountain township of Jijona. First, said they, the town was crammed with people—a most necessary concomitant to enjoyment. In no country in the world is the gregarious nature of man so plainly exhibited as in Spain. Here your solitary pleasurer will find no sympathisers. The man who plays his lonely golf, matched with an imaginary colonel, would not be understood; the hermit is either a saint or a lunatic. Crowds, crowds, form the oil in the salad of Spanish amusement. Secondly, said they, that very night in the Plaza the priests were giving a free public cinema entertainment; thirdly, on the day following, a cow was to be loosened in the streets. "This," they averred, "is a wonderful diversion. Men are thrown here and there, the cow gallops, men try to catch her, they are rolled over, others come to their rescue—oh, it is most *precioso!*" Fourthly, and this was the crux and, indeed, the foundation of the feast, the old drama of the Moors and Christians was to be played over again. This town lies in the territory once dominated by the Moors. They say its original name was Saracena, and to-day, locally, Jijona is pronounced "Shishona." It owes much of its wealth of almonds to the extensive terrace cultivation by which the Moors converted the mountains from barrenness to fertility. A matchboard castle had been erected in the square; this was to be stormed first by the Moors and subsequently by the Christians. The whole thing, they said, was to be very luxurious—not quite so luxurious as last year, because the presidents of the *fiesta* were not so rich as those of the preceding festival, and, owing to the tobacco shortage, a scene of smuggling by the *contrabandistas* was to be omitted. Thus in Jijona they celebrate the festival of the

patron saint of the town, St. Sebastian, whose monastery perches high on a crag half a mile to the southward.

After supper—at which we tasted the famous turron of Jijona, a delicious sweetmeat made from almonds and honey, not unlike the halva of Smyrna, and carrying behind its almond taste a queer but not unpleasant hint of flavour resembling the smell of an overheated chair—we went out into the narrow streets to look for the Plaza and for the priests' cinema entertainment. Indeed, the first concomitant of Spanish pleasure had been amply fulfilled. The streets were crowded. There were peasants dressed in black, blue, or yellow-green blouses, with sandalled feet; girls in black bodices, pale skirts and shawls, green, red, or of a fine rich Paisley-like pattern; there were the visitors, more sophisticated people from Alcoy, Valencia, or Alicante, some of their ladies even wearing hats.

At the far end of the Plaza dimly could be discerned the wooden castle, in shape not unlike one of those quaint woodcuts in an old edition of Froissart, and some distance before it, high in the air, the stretched sheet upon which the free "movies" were to be projected from the topmost pinnacle of the castle. As the time of the performance drew near, the populace came, bringing their chairs with them, until the Plaza, both before and behind the screen, was packed. The performance was hardly a success. The illumination was of the dimmest, the screen pitched high amongst the trees over our heads. In addition, a young moon in its first quarter intruded above the mountain-tops, and from our point of view shone almost through the centre of the sheet. Sometimes this intrusive crescent usurped the heroine's head, sometimes the hero's waistcoat. After straining our eyes for some twenty minutes, having reflected upon gift-horses and teeth, we went to bed, wondering what those spectators who were upon the wrong side of the screen, and who, in consequence, could not read the legends—when they were able to read—would construe out of these dim dramas.



PREPARING TO LOOSE THE BULL.

A corner of the wooden castle erected in the Plaza for the occasion is shown in this photograph.

On the evening of the morrow the cow, as in the well-known story, proved to be a bull—three bulls, moreover. The entrances to the Plaza had been blocked with wooden palisades, while balconies were filling with the beauty and the more sedate manhood of Jijona. Thither each bull, like a wasp in a spider's web, plunging at the end of long ropes tied to its horns, was hauled by the youths of the district. Two of the bulls

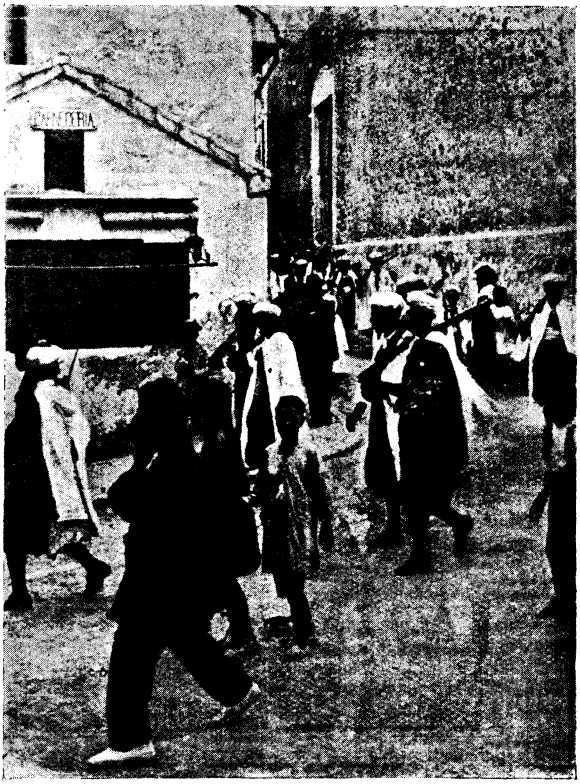
were thrust into an improvised pen, while to the horns of the third a variant of boxing-gloves was bound. The ropes were then slipped, and the fun began. It was a sort of elaborate ticky-touchwood. " Home " in this case consisted of anywhere out of reach of the bull's tossing capacity—open doors, the ironwork of windows, water-pipes, the barricades of the streets, lamp-posts, youthful trees, a pump round which one could dodge, and a wall topped by a rickety fence, the paling backed by a vituperative old man, who cursed at the players for damaging his fence, and who was cursed heartily in return by the young men for having such an insecure paling on bull-baiting occasions.

On the whole, the game was amusing, though not furious. Some of the *valientes* showed considerable pluck. One lad tripped and fell, and the bull tried to gore him with the boxing-gloves. The bull charged a sapling, and a boy who was clinging to the upper branches was flipped off into the street. It was also amusing to note the extraordinary concavity of curves exhibited in the back of a bolter who imagined the bull close behind, and who could feel in imagination those boxing-gloves prodding his spine. Sometimes exhibitions of clever dodging awoke a gasp and a cheer from the balconies; but one could not help wondering what would have happened to that bull if twenty public-school boys had been loosed in that Plaza.

At last the lights faded. First the bull and then the youths tired. The animal was captured with ropes and was led away to become meat for future Jijona dinners. The diners must have felt as if they were eating a playmate.

The other two bulls provided similar fun for Monday and Tuesday, and in turn degenerated to frying-pan or stew-pot. On Wednesday the grand parade of the Moors and Christians took place.

The first hint of sun was greeted by the local brass band with queer semi-Oriental music, and as the morning aged, gradually other bands came in, until seven or eight bands were in full blast, each playing a different tune, and each trying to drown its rivals in sound. Gradually Moors and Christians gathered. The Moors varied from the Near East to the Far. The chief and his immediate suite were Bedouin Arabs, and there were Turks, Saracens, Hindus, negroes, and some of uncertain lineage. Girls accompanied each group, carrying bottles filled with liquor, which would have pleased Omar Khayyam rather than Mahomet. The Christians included Roman soldiers, Crusaders, Cavaliers, and smugglers of 1800; the latter were the



THE MOROS MARCHING THROUGH THE STREETS.

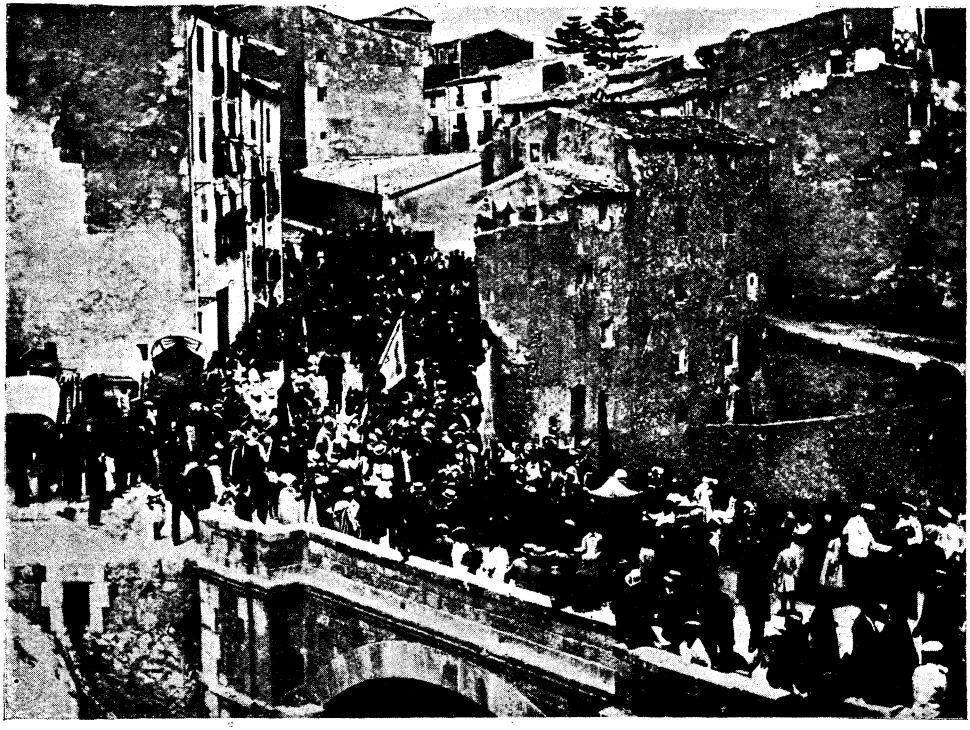
chief Christian and his retinue. *Vivandières* attended the Christians with drink no less stimulating than that supplied to their Moorish enemies. Moors and Christians carried large blunderbusses of ancient pattern, and all day long, to the sounds of indefatigable melody, they paraded the town. It seemed the duty of the Moors to be comic, that of the Christians to be serious. The Moors wore huge black goggles, and many had enormous imitation black beards, which, when the heat grew too intense, they took off to use as a fan.

Nor did the *fiesta* cease with the going down of the sun. With discreet intervals for refreshment, both music and marching continued till two a.m., at which time sleep and a blessed silence fell upon Jijona.

Undeterred by but four hours' rest, punctually at six the cacophony of brass recommenced. By midday exhilaration had reached its height. A body of Crusaders, having exchanged helmets for the bandsmen's caps, were found dancing *jotas* down the main road. But a short siesta recovered them for the principal work of the day—the entry of the Moors. About four in the afternoon the performers gathered at the picturesque southern entrance of the village, this symbolising the direction from which the ancient conquerors had come. Then band by band, with blunderbusses banging off into the air, the Christians slowly retreated backwards up the street to the Plaza. Last of the Christians came the *contrabandistas*, and last of the smugglers the chief, clad in a wonderful old Spanish costume of velvet embroidered with gold, silver, and silk, and blanket striped of many colours. Facing him advanced, with equal solemnity and noise, the chief Moor and his followers. After some two and a half hours' deafening clatter, the whole troupe was in movement, some backwards, some forwards. At this funeral pace by seven o'clock the Moors had arrived at the castle.

"Now for the charge!" we thought.

But, mounting a profusely decorated horse, the sheik began a long declamation. The *contrabandista*, evidently a man of deeds only, had hired to represent him a real actor, who, in the costume of a Cavalier, replied in his turn from the castle turret, and roared Thespian abuse at the Moor.



THE MOROS PREPARING TO ENTER THE TOWNSHIP FROM THE SOUTH.

For almost an hour by the clock this continued. Then the *Christianos* gently evacuated the tower, and the *Moros* marched in.

With ears singing from the guns, we sought a *café*, passing, as we went, the booth, made of green boughs, in which performers too tired—or otherwise overcome—were stretched upon sacks of straw.

Though officially the day was ended, practically it was not. Those who had private stocks of powder continued the gunfire till midnight. The bands, their music becoming more and more incoherent, played on till about two o'clock. The last

day was a repetition of this, save that the Moors retreated and the Christians advanced from the opposite side of the town, and the night was brightened by a modest firework display.

Subsequently we have been invited to *fiestas* at Albacete and at Murcia, but we have avoided them. Spain is a wonderful country, the Spanish a lovable people, courteous and possessed of a fine natural culture; but to enjoy these *fiestas* as they should be enjoyed—that is, to appreciate them as does a Spaniard—requires a sense of values and perhaps a nervous organism which we do not possess. There are even Spaniards who do not enjoy them.



THE CHIEF MORO ENTERING THE TOWNSHIP, OPPOSED BY THE CHIEF CONTRABANDISTA.

AT THE FULL MOON.

THE desperate wind from the west
Blows over marsh and wold;
It strikes like a knife at the breast,
Keen, cruel, and cold;
The voice of the sea complains
Of old betrayals and wrongs—
I know those griefs, those pains:
They surge in my songs.

I, too, love one above me,
As the moon is loved by the sea.
I, too, believed she could love me:
As the moon loves, so loves she.
Cold as the moon and sad,
Beautiful, high above us—
Oh, I and the sea were mad
To dream she could love us.

E. NESBIT.

DEAD MATCHES

By M. L. C. PICKTHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

"YOU at home, Edda?" said Cheaven, opening the door. A moment his great stature filled the doorway, then he entered the room.

Edda Lefroy, sitting at the table, slowly lifted her face to him; she did not otherwise move. Jensen, who had been leaning eagerly over the table, unfolding a small parcel, remained so, the string in his fingers. Only from the warm corner by the stove Gran'paw piped suddenly: "Why, maw, it's Willy Cheaven come home!"

Cheaven went and shook hands with Gran'paw. Gran'maw made little chirping noises, catching at his great hands. He bent gravely and kissed her. Then he went to the table.

Behind him Gran'paw repeated impatiently: "Eddy, it's Willy Cheaven come back. Ain't you goin' to speak to him?"

The colour rosed Edda's clear face until it seemed luminous. She said steadily: "Will, I'm glad to see you back. You been away a long while. There are—changes . . ."

"I know," said Cheaven. "You and Jensen been keepin' company."

He drew out a chair and sat down, facing Jensen, with the girl between. Jensen laid down the little parcel he had been holding. He said, looking straight at Cheaven: "I hope she'll marry me, Will. We been together a lot since you left. It's all square, ain't it?"

"It's all square. There was no promise between us. She just wasn't sure."

"Don't know her own mind," put in Gran'paw unexpectedly.

Edda said gently over her shoulder: "Go on readin' the paper to Gran'maw, dear."

"*She* don't know her own mind," complained Gran'paw. "First she wants the shippin,' then the fashins. Now she's asleep."

Jensen was looking simply and kindly at Cheaven. "Then there's nothin' wrong," he said, "and we can be all friends."

"Sure," returned Cheaven directly. They shook hands across Edda, as if for the moment they had forgotten her. In both men was apparent a physical strength so great it involved a certain largeness of soul.

"Good boys," murmured Gran'paw.

Jensen took up the little parcel again. Suddenly he began to laugh. "Guess what this is, Willy!" he roared. "You just come in time to see. There's two months' savin's right here in this little box. It's my first gift to my girl!"

Edda looked slowly from one man to the other. Inscrutable Nature slept in her eyes.

Jensen took from the little white box a gold chain with a pretty amethyst pendant. He dangled it in front of Edda on one huge finger. "What you think of this, hey?" he asked proudly.

"It's real nice," said the girl slowly. Cheaven agreed, smiling at both.

"She ain't taken it yet," chuckled Jensen. "She lets on she don't care for gifts. Maybe I won't give it to her. Hey? Say, Will, what did you bring her?"

Then he blushed and could have struck himself for saying such a thing to Will, who loved Edda, too.

But Will only smiled. "I ain't brought her a thing," he said at once. "I landed at Port Parry, cleaned right out. I got about eighty cents in my pocket—borrowed." He stretched out his arm, and they saw four inches of sinewy wrist below the sleeve. "Even my clo'es 're borrowed," he explained. "I lost every last thing but myself. And that," he finished after a pause, looking now at Edda alone, "I'd have lost, too, only for thinkin' you might want it."

"Will . . ."

"It's all square." He looked back at Jensen, as if he would understand better. "You don't. You're not to worry. I'll get goin' again in time."

"But the launch?" they said, staring.

"Piled her up near Calumet six weeks back. Lost all my outfit. Everythin' but

this." He laughed and thumped his chest.

Jensen was slowly folding the paper round the jeweller's box. His fingers worked while his troubled blue eyes were fixed on Cheaven. "Why, Will," he said—"why, Will—why, that's too bad!"

Edda had been watching Cheaven intently. Now she asked him: "How did you get back from Calumet?"

They saw a change in Cheaven's familiar face. They were bewildered. For a moment he looked worn, feeble, old. Then they understood.

He was remembering suffering

Edda drew in her breath sharply. That queer, new, vacant gaze of Cheaven's turned to her, then went back to Jensen.

It was Edda who had questioned him. He replied to Jensen, as if the other man alone would understand. "Why," he said, "I walked back along the North Shore. I had to do it in four days and three nights."

"Why that?" asked Jensen quickly.

"I'd three matches left," explained Cheaven.

Jensen leaned back in his seat. With a curious stern movement he swept the trivial little jeweller's box into his pocket.

"I piled the launch up on the tail of a blizzard," said Will Cheaven. "It was my own fault. I'd no kind of business stoppin' along there so late. But I'd a get-rich-quick fancy on me, and the whole place is drippin' copper. . . . Well, I was liftin' her through the smother. The sun was comin' out behind. The snow was all gold. I thought I was clear. Then I felt her hit. She wouldn't answer. The waves just took her an' pitched her like she was a ball. Next thing, I felt the beach hit me.

"For a while I didn't know much. Then I woke and stood up. As I did so, bits of the beach come, too. I was all over stones and gravel, which had froze on to me while I lay.

"The Lake was roarin' for miles, dark blue. There was nothin' left of the blizzard but a bar of gold mist, and the hard dry little balls of snow rustlin' all over. Seemed to me the Lake was makin' some noise. Then I saw there was floe-ice smashin' all along.

"It seemed to come from nowhere in the blizzard. Broke loose from a river, I guess. The sun had come out. It looked fine. And I reckoned up I was sixty miles from a town.

"I beat some life into my hands—beat 'em on the sand till I could feel it. Then I searched my pockets.

"I found an empty pipe, a knife, some string, and three matches. That was all I had left.

"I told you the sun had come out. I fixed them three matches between two stones to dry. I began to see that a consid'rable lot depended on them.

"My matchbox must have been in my oilskin coat that I'd just had time to slip clear of when the launch struck on the ledge I could see a half-mile out. If I hadn't slipped clear, I should have drowned. I began to wonder if it wouldn't have been better that way.

"There wasn't a thing to be seen of the launch. She'd just dropped off the ledge into maybe fourteen fathom. All my food had gone with her, all my outfit. I'd just my frozen clo'es and three wet matches, and sixty miles to go, countin' luck out of it.

"I went and looked at them matches. Seemed to me they was dryin' some. I took off my clo'es and pegged them out on the rocks that felt a little warm in the sun. There was a few scrub spruces back of the beach. I cut some branches, and while I was waitin' I licked myself up and down the beach with branches of spruce. It kept me warm, runnin' up and down, but it made me ter'ble hungry.

"All the while I thought things over.

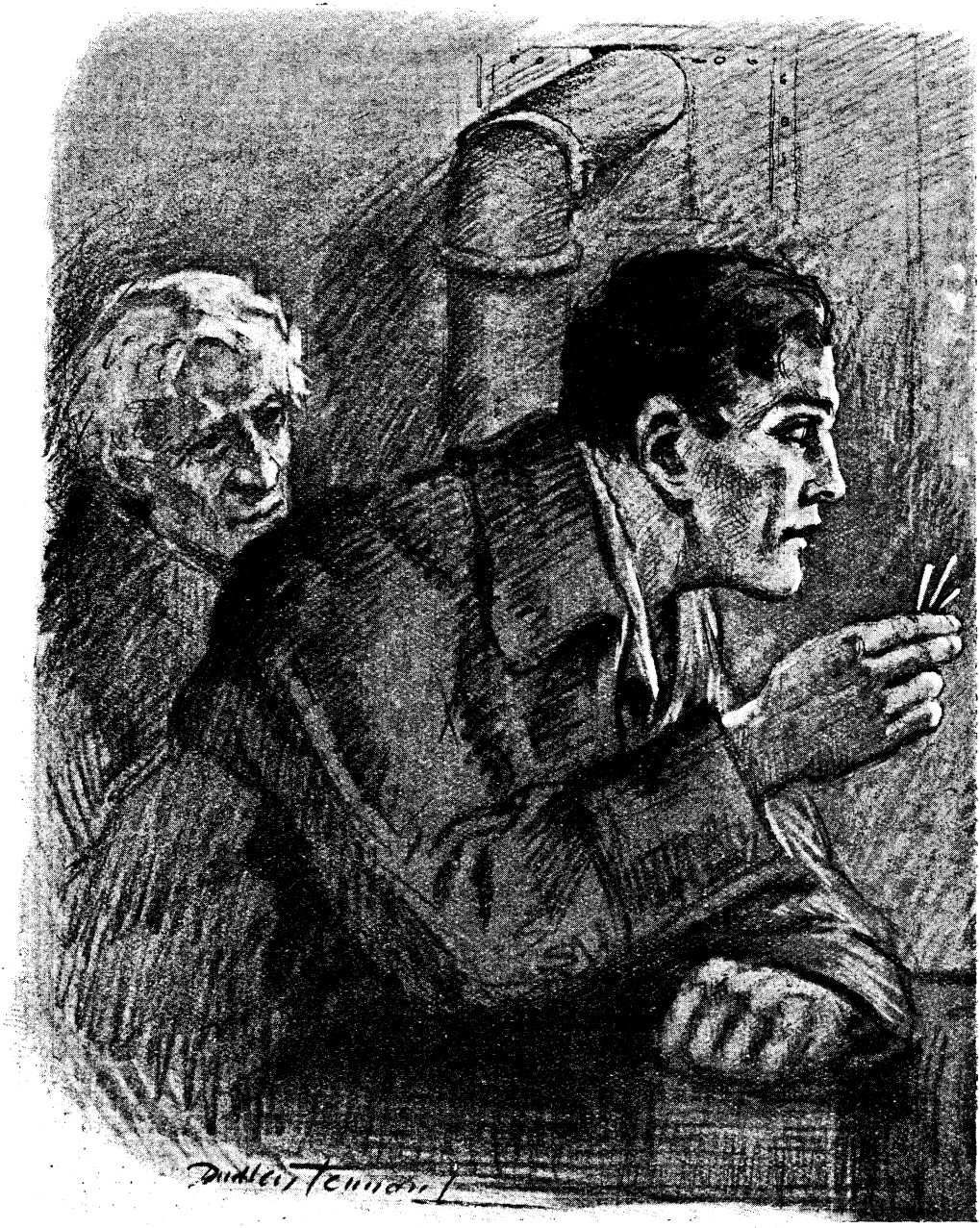
"The question was, would I stop and try to raise some grub off the land, so to say—fish or somethin'—or would I go right on without it while my stren'th held?

"I fixed on the last.

"My gun and lines was gone. Suppose I spent hours gettin' a crow or a whitefish, would it make up for the lost time? No, I reckoned my best chance was to walk east till I dropped.

"My clo'es 'd dried a little. I put 'em on. I ripped three bits of linin' outer my coat and wrapped a match in each, after paddin' it with dry moss, and buttoned them up in my shirt. Then I set right out to walk home.

"My stren'th was in me yet, though I was cold and hungry. All day I walked east. I walked at a great pace. My idea was to make good time the first two days while I'd be strong. I walked along the beach under the cliffs. The painted cliffs were full of caves, nothin' in 'em but empty swallows' nests. I thought



"'Unless you'd like these here.'"

maybe I'd pass the night in a cave. But at sunset the beach stopped and the waves run right into them, thunderin' with the early floe. I had to climb up and walk along the top.

"It was ter'ble cold, the temp'rature droppin' after the blizzard, and dead still. The ice-blink was all mixed up with the stars. One minute everythin' 'd be grey, then green. I went on for hours. I seen one snowy owl. Then I slipped and fell on the rock.

"It was no wonder, hittin' that pace in the dark. What surprised me was that I couldn't get up. Then I realised that for the first time in my life I was beat out. It gave me a queer kind of scare. I got up at last and looked for a place to rest.



"'There's what's left of them three matches,' chuckled Will."

"There didn't seem any place on the cliffs. Soon's I quit walkin', the cold shut round me like a suit of clo'es. I listened over the edge, and by the sound the Lake was breakin' on a beach again. I found a ravine and went down it, feelin' for loose wood. But the snow was heavy there, and the sun had been there after the snow. Everythin' was pretty well froze.

"There in the dark I gathered what

fuel I could. I come out on the beach. I found a little holler in the cliff—hardly a cave. In the sand floorin' of it I scooped a hole. I went and found stones and made kind of a fireplace. I lined it with bunch-grass for fear it'd be damp. Then I took out one of the little bundles that held a match.

"It seemed funny to take all that trouble for a match.

"You'll remember my matchbox was lost. I had a flat bit o' sandstone all ready to strike the match on. Then a queer sick feelin' come over me all in a minute. I shook so I nearly quit hold on the match.

"The scare come before the thought. Then the thought come.

"I couldn't remember what kind of a match it was.

"Was it one of them strike-only-on-the-box kind? If so, would it strike on sandstone?

"And if it wouldn't, hadn't I better quit—let go right there?"

He smiled slowly at Jensen. "For a while," he said, "I was scared even to *try* and strike that match.

"Then I took up the sandstone and struck it.

"The head give a little fizz and flew off. I couldn't see where it went. I looked all over. I thought it was no good. Then, while I was crawlin' round my little cave, feelin' after it in the sand, a little flame sprung up from the dry grass in the fireplace. The head had fallen there. There must have bin a spark. . . . I nursed that spark with chips and twigs and shreds of bark. I thought it the loveliest thing I ever seen. I went out and found driftwood on the beach. I brought it back to the little holler, all rosy with the light, like a house-door. I made a big fire. Then I lay down and slep' almost before I hit the sand.

"That was a good night.

"I woke up with the fire dead out and sunlight shinin' into the holler. I hadn't meant to sleep so long. The fire 'd bin out a long while. I was stiff with cold. When I went to move, it was like movin' wood. I knew I mustn't stop. I left the holler and turned east, walkin' for all I was worth.

"There was beaches ahead of me, far as I could see. I was glad. The waves 'd gone down. There was no wind. Mile after mile there was just the shush-shush-shush of the short Lake waves on the beaches, and an echo from the cliffs. Mile after mile. And I was hungry—*hungry*.

"Well, I guessed I could stand it. I walked right on.

"I reckoned I'd done about six miles when I looked back.

"Clear in sight yet behind me was the point of cliffs where I'd had my fire in the night. They was all striped red and pink. I knew 'em.

"I stood and stared back at them. Again that queer sick kind of scare come over me. I thought I'd done six miles, and there was them cliffs, not two miles away.

"I'd put in the effort for six miles, and made two.

"I was ter'ble surprised. I'd no notion meals 'd make all that differ.

"I walked right on.

"All day I walked on. The country never changed. Seemed as if it was the same bit of beach under the same painted cliffs. I was scared to look back, for fear I hadn't moved. . . . All day my stren'th held. It only quit at sunset.

"I was crossin' a vein of rock. Beyond it was a pool. I stood on the rock and said aloud, as if I was crazy: 'I'm goin' to fall in that pool!' And I did. Pitched in and fainted, with only sense enough to twist as I fell, so the matches wouldn't get wet. My luck was clear out that time."

"Luck?" repeated Gran'paw shrilly. "Luck? Pshaw, you don't need to care about luck if you know yore own mind."

"When I come to," Cheaven went on in his quiet way, "I couldn't feel I had a body to hurt. That come later. It was all over. It was—peace." He made a slow gesture to try and express the quality of that deadly peace. "I was just alive enough to know, 'If I stop here, I'll die.' And I didn't care. I—wanted to stop."

Involuntarily, as it seemed, Edda spoke. "What made you care?"

"You," said Cheaven gently. "But you're not to feel bad. It's all square. I only thought: 'Maybe, after all, she'll want me. I'd best go on, in case. . . .' By and by I got out of the pool.

"Ice come with me, great plates and leaves of it. I rolled in the sand, tryin' to get life into me. It—was pain when it come. *Pain!* In an hour I could use my hands. Then I went about and gathered sticks and dry grass for my fire. I'd forgotten food and sleep and everythin' else, only the fire—to be warm. . . .

"I fixed it all under a rock. I took out one of the matches and struck it on a stone. Nothin' come.

" I struck it again and again. I struck it till the head was all wore off. It was no good.

" I'd just one match left.

" I took that out and felt of it. I—ached for that fire like I'd never ached for anythin'. But I put it away."

He looked now at Jensen. With perfect simplicity he explained: " Only for her, I must have lighted the third match. But I knew I might live through the second night. I'd never live through the third. And she might be needin' me, I thought, some day.

" There was only one thing to do. I must keep on—go on all night, and sleep when the sun come out.

" I went on all night."

He was silent. After a moment Jensen heaved himself in his chair with a long breath, and the paper of the love-gift crackled in his pocket.

" Just like that," Cheaven went on suddenly, " the sand was all ice, and it crackled just like that as I went over it. Sometimes I walked into the cliff, sometimes into the surf. I guess it was that night I got my feet froze. It was my feet kep' me at Port Parry two weeks. Sometimes I lay down on the sand. But by that time I didn't want to sleep. It was gone. I seemed to be miles away from myself. Light and queer. . . . Once or twice I heard myself say: 'Can you give me a match? Say, can you fellers give me a match?' And of course there wasn't any fellers, nor any matches but the one buttoned into my shirt. I told 'em, too, Edda might want me.

" The third dawn come. I was lyin' on the sand under a rock. Maybe I'd fainted again. I don't know. I seen first that the rock cast a shadow, then that the shadow drew toward me.

" The sun reached me. Then I slept.

" I don't know how long. The sun was high when I went on. There was no heat in it. I was weak.

" My head wasn't just right. I'd find myself wastin' time, pokin' in pools and creeks. I didn't rightly know what for. First it'd seem to be matches, then mudfish. I didn't find neither. But under the rope of stale weed on an old high-water mark I found some little fish, rotten and frozen. I ate 'em, walkin' along.

" Then I'd dropped again. And it was night. Time to light my last fire.

" I had to do it. But then even the longin' for fire had gone. I was so used up, I didn't know if I was warm or cold, nor care if I lived or died, except for Edda here.

" I crawled about the beach on my hands and knees, fixin' the spot for my fire, gatherin' wood. It took me a long while. I had to carry the wood bit by bit, I was that weak.

" I took out the last match and lit the fire. It burned well. I watched the little flames creep along the bits of dry grass and lay hold on the twigs. It seemed like my life was risin' in me as the flames rose. I hugged the fire so close my clo'es was scorched. I was burned, and never knew.

" Then I heard somethin' hiss into the heat. I lifted my face.

" It was rainin', a cold fine rain that froze as it fell.

" I sat there and watched the rain put my last fire out.

" I still sat there when there was nothin' but embers and charred sticks with the thin dark ice coatin' them. The night was all round me, and the bitter rain. There seemed nothin' left to do but lie down by the ashes and let go. I knew the freezin' wet would put me out quick as it had the fire. It seemed to me that just to quit *tryin'* to live would be like heaven. . . . I was all used up. I just wanted to stop there and feel the rain on my face till I didn't feel it no more. . . ."

Again, after a moment, Jensen stirred in his chair with that long deep breath. " You went on, Willy," he said, as if it were a question, " you went on? "

" Yes," answered Cheaven, and his eyes rested on Edda an instant. " Presently I got up and went on."

" Good boy, Willy Cheaven," put in Gran'paw, so suddenly they all started. " Knows his own mind better'n the whole silly push o' you! "

" I went on all night," said Cheaven.

He turned his hands palm upward on the table. They saw that the flesh was still scored with half-healed wounds. " My knees is like that, too," he went on, " so I guess I must have crawled. But I don't remember one thing of that last night—not one thing."

He laughed softly. " Queer to go on that way and not remember a thing about it! Well, well! "

" What do you remember? " asked Jensen, with strange gentleness.

" A fire! Yes. A fire in a rainy mornin', and a little tent, and a lot o' wild duck hung up on a line, and a feller in a grey

sweater starin' at me over the fire. His name's Williams. He's a white man. And I crawled right up to him and I ses: 'Say, have you got a match?'"

Cheaven looked from Edda to Jensen as if he expected them to smile as he was smiling. "I was just crazy," he explained.

"That feller Williams took me straight into Port Parry. It was only two miles away. Yes. I'd done sixty-three. . . He was real good to me, and fixed me up at the hospital while I was sick, and loaned me these clo'es and ten dollars. I come right on here to see how Edda was. . . . I ain't a dollar left. I got to get to work right away." He looked at Edda. "So you see how it is," he said apologetically, "I ain't brought you a thing."

The girl's deep slate-grey eyes rested on him strangely. "Yes," she said, "I see."

Cheaven looked relieved. "Not a thing," he repeated, "unless"—he felt in his pockets—"why, yes, unless you'd like these here!" He smilingly laid before her on the table three little objects.

They were the small stubs of two burnt matches and one complete match with the head worn away.

"There's what's left of them three matches," chuckled Will.

No one spoke or moved. After a minute the silence troubled him. He said quickly: "Why, *Edda!*"

The girl did not lift her head, which was bent over the three matches on the table. But she was weeping—weeping so passionately that her tears splashed on the cloth about the three dead matches. Cheaven stared at her helplessly. It was Jensen at last who spoke, not to him, but to Edda.

"Sixty-three miles along the North Shore in November, with nothin' to eat but dead fish," he said softly, "because you might want him!"

"Yes."

"I could have died," said Jensen, "but I couldn't have lived to do that for anyone!"

Both talked in the strangest still way, the grave man and the weeping girl, as if Cheaven were not there.

The girl closed her hands like a little fence round the three bits of matches. "It's his life," she said, "he's brought me here."

"Yes," agreed Jensen. "I brought you a gold chain. He's brought you his life."

"Jensen," said Cheaven roughly, "what you mean?"

"I mean we got to get square about this keepin' company business." Jensen still addressed Edda. "You—you wasn't *sure* when he went away. Then you thought you liked me. I guess you do, some. But this is a business in which we *got* to—to know our own minds."

"Yes," agreed Edda seriously. She was touching the matches softly with her fingers and weeping all the while.

"Well, then," said Jensen, "well, we'll start afresh. Him and me'll be on just the same footin' for a month. At the end of it we'll come and see which—which you'll take—my gold chain or his dead matches."

"Jensen!" cried Cheaven again. "Jensen!"

But Jensen got up quickly and went out. In a minute Cheaven sprang up and followed him. They could be heard talking outside.

Edda sat still, her hands enclosing the matches. She had not stirred at all when they went out. Only her eyes had followed the man who had brought her nothing but himself.

From the warm shadow Gran'paw spoke, his hand on Gran'maw's. "It's a good thing to know yore own mind while you're young."

THE SIGN OF THE SERPENT

By REGINALD JENNINGS

ILLUSTRATED BY SEPTIMUS H. POWER

THERE had been no rain for months, and the few scattered water-holes were either dried up or polluted with the carcases of rabbits, some of which had travelled from beyond the wire-netted boundary fences, where the vermin lay in long lines, forming, at regular intervals, a convenient ledge which enabled the more agile to scale the netting.

Tresswaite loved this desolate, devil's own land, which smiled or frowned as the clouds gave or withheld their treasure. For had he not won it by the sweat of his brow—from jackaroo to overseer, and from overseer to part-owner? Had he not, after a series of good seasons, paid off his partner, smoked a farewell pipe with him on the verandah of the home-station, and gazed with a delightful sense of proprietorship across the twenty odd miles that ran out in monotonous undulations to the boundary fence? He was lord of all he surveyed—one whose labour had yielded its increase. And now? He almost laughed—laughed with tears in his eyes.

He had been a little awed at first. The dry, bleating appeal of thirsty sheep was too human in its suggestiveness, and the carrion birds hovered and circled overhead in cruel anticipation. Sometimes, as the weary weeks had gone by, he had become a little afraid of himself, afraid that something would give way—his strength, his brain, his self-control, he knew not what—and his firm-set features had gradually assumed a sunken, overstrained expression.

These days had not been devoid of incident. The shearers had come, but, finding the sheep too weak to shear, they had gone south to the rain areas, grumbling about some broken contract and hinting at possible penalties. Then had followed the burning of the wool-shed, the cruel outcome of malicious design. He had seen the bare, sinewy arm, richly coloured with the outline of a tattooed snake, slowly worm its way through an aperture beside a heap of thready fleece which had been saturated with petrol. He had grasped the straining limb, that writhed and turned as if the very serpent on its flesh had taken life, and the lighted match, like a venomed fang, darted back as the pile shot into leaping tongues of flame. He had battled with the crackling beams, that seemed to reach out to the racing fire and draw it in. Then he had rushed from the wool-shed, half choked and scorched, only to see the bulking cloud of red dust which obscured the galloping horse of the incarnate devil who had wrought the ruin.

For two solid days he had waited in the blazing sun for this man, knowing that he dare not travel far during the drought. From the rise on which he had stationed himself, Tresswaite watched the clouds of dust sweeping and circling across the plain in huge overwhelming spiral pillars—great terrifying columns that blotted out the rays of the sun, turning its glare into a glowing red haze; and across the northern sky, like a succouring host, the storm-clouds came quickly on.

It was a weary business, this prolonged watching, but his patience was sustained by the one overmastering resolution which would not let him rest till his purpose was fulfilled.

The sun had sunk, and, as the dusk settled over the plain, he scanned the horizon again with his field-glasses. He could clearly make out the few scattered sheep, which managed to gain a kind of sustenance on some stunted salt bush and stubble on the far corner of the run. He saw, too, with quickening heart-beat, a man ride out from behind a ridge and hunt down a straggler.

Tresswaite threw his rein over his horse's neck and jumped lightly into the saddle, steadying the colt with a few soft words, as if he feared that his movement might be observed across the space which separated him from the man for whom he had waited so long. Then he slowly skirted the fringe of the rise, until he had cut off the man's retreat, when he put spurs to his horse, and, so engrossed was the thief in preparing his victim for a hurried meal, that Tresswaite was almost upon him before he noticed his danger. As he rushed for his horse, in his anxiety to beat a hasty retreat, the animal took fright and careered off, while the man, dodging and turning like a coursed hare, tried to reach the wire fence, and Tresswaite, standing in his stirrups, dogged his steps till the panting wretch fell in a huddled heap. As he sat on the man's heaving chest, he folded back the hanging shirt-sleeve, and for a few moments of almost uncontrollable fury gazed at the brilliant spots of the tattooed serpent that coiled round the sun-scorched arm. His twitching fingers moved slowly towards the bared throat, till, with a feeling of utter loathing, he drew back and tied the man's wrists to the stirrup-iron with a plaited rope.

As they made their way to the homestead, which would take some hours to reach, the prisoner lagged back, and, like a captured dingo waiting to be set free, cast sidelong glances of appeal at Tresswaite, who tried to shut out the sound of the dry, rasping voice that pleaded so incessantly for freedom, while across their path the runaway horse galloped with hanging rein and outstretched head, pulling up every few minutes to survey its master and neigh as if in protest.

The dusk stole on, deepening into night, and a few puffs of cool wind ruffled the cracked, parched surface of the plain, driving the loosened stubble before it; and Tresswaite, feeling the relief, took off his broad-brimmed hat and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"I say, mate," whined the man, as if this fraternal form of address might win for him some claim to sympathy, "one or two sheep won't make no diff'rence, and I'm dead down on my luck."

Tresswaite, however, was not inclined to show much leniency towards one who endeavoured to veil his crime in the meshes of a petty theft and plead hunger and want of luck as a prevarication.

For an hour they moved slowly on, and some flaky clouds, the forerunners of a gathering host, sped on across the sky. From the increasing strain on the stirrup, it was obvious that the man was beginning to show signs of fatigue, and Tresswaite, realising that a rest was essential, drew rein, and, after dismounting, pulled the strap from its socket and gave him enough freedom to sit down. He took a flask from his belt and offered it to his captive, who grasped it eagerly and drained it with feverish gulps.

As the wind freshened, the two men, like wearied nomads of the plain, sat on in silence, while Tresswaite's horse nibbled at a withered grass tree, looking up occasionally with dumb inquiry at the straying horse, which still hovered near at hand, gazing through the gloom that was fast shrouding the plain.

The man at length lay on his back, supporting his head with his bound hands. He was miserably clad, and his beard, ill-kept and shaggy, only partly hid the sunken cheeks, which were wizened and dust-stained. His deep-set eyes gazed vacantly into the sky, where the storm-clouds were advancing with startling rapidity, hiding the stars which had already appeared.

"If all them bloomin' stars was yours," he said, more in contemplation than inquiry, "would ye grudge me one?"

But Tresswaite apparently did not feel disposed to discuss any hypothetical proprietorship of the heavenly bodies. His experience as a property-holder on this more tangible planet did not encourage further speculation. Then, like an Eastern beggar who calls for alms by the roadside, the man pleaded again and again for freedom, till at last, recognising the hopelessness of his plaint, he relapsed into silence, while Tresswaite thought of the tattooed serpent which, a few days before, had turned and writhed in his grasp as it had strained back from the leaping flames which it had kindled. For some moments the same almost overmastering desire took hold of him—a desire to clutch the begrimed, repellent cur by the throat and force the very life from out his body. Yet he would not do that. He would give him into the hands of the law.

Tresswaite turned away and watched the oncoming storm that would bring with it life and hope and gladness, when the parched, lonely plain had drunk in its quenching draught. Far sweeter than organ pipes in cloistered cathedral was the sound of that wind that soughed and sighed along the empty water-courses and across the thirsty, desolate expanse. No music in all the world



"Tresswaite . . . tried to shut out the sound of the dry, rasping voice that pleaded so incessantly for freedom."

could so thrill the soul of him, who knew so well the stress of days and the long, cruel waiting and suspense. And only those who have heard that moaning song can ever know its meaning—the reverie of a breaking drought, the prelude of a storm.

Tresswaite was suddenly conscious that the prisoner was trying to attract his attention He was sitting upright, and had even placed his bound hands for a moment on his captor's knee. In the faint light the man's forbidding features seemed to wear a wild, scared expression. Tresswaite involuntarily drew back as the thunder rumbled and died.

"Listen," the man began, "and I will tell you something."

The intensity of earnestness with which this quiet announcement was made succeeded in drawing the attention of Tresswaite, who till now had remained entirely unresponsive. The man's voice and manner were in such striking contrast to his former servile attitude that, in spite of his not unnatural repugnance, Tresswaite even evinced a genuine desire to hear what he might have to communicate of such great moment. No doubt it would be some canting plea in mitigation of his offence, which would show him in the light of a much-maligned instrument in the hands of a down-trodden, red-flagged community that must needs hurl its firebrands at the leisured, moneyed squatter who has usurped the pioneer's portion. Or would it be that eternal lamentation of a vicious, wasted life—some story out of a dead past which held a secret of better, worthier days?

Tresswaite made a sign by way of encouraging him to proceed.

"Listen," he repeated, in slow, measured tones, as if he desired to convey into his words a significance which would give them a more considerable weight. "Over the brow of yonder rise lies a dead man. Last night I killed him!"

He paused to dwell on the effect of his startling statement, which was uttered with a perfect disregard of the fact that he was not only further incriminating himself, but branding himself as a crime-besotted creature, whose only claim to pity lay in the ignorance of his own depravity.

"I killed him in fair fight, with a swing of the stirrup, and the devil dropped like a stone."

There was a long silence, while the man worked unceasingly at the plaited cords that cut into his scarred wrists. The wind had lulled, and a few full drops of rain, like dripping solder, fell around them, and Tresswaite, drawing in his bridle, made a movement as though he intended to proceed before the downpour set in; but the man again leant forward, and, with the same detaining gesture, bade him hear the details of the ugly crime, the victim of which had apparently failed to observe some pledge or promise that possessed a binding element sacred even to this tainted being. Yet why had he revealed so much? Surely the silent plain would have kept its secret, and left the vultures and the drifting sand to obliterate all trace of the foul deed. Or was it the plaguing pang of remorse that bade him confide in a fellow-creature, who perchance might soothe his soul?

Yet another few minutes and the biting cords would be loosed, and, having confessed his guilt, he could steal away into the night, or with free hands he might even——

Tresswaite drew in the rope and, fixing the stirrup strap in its socket, jerked the rein over his horse's neck and climbed into the saddle. He had decided to cross the rise, so that he might pass the place where the murdered man evidently lay, and thus substantiate the story. The law, at least, would take no half measures with those who murdered their fellow-men, even though they stood self-condemned. The penalty for such an act would be, at all events, a fitting retribution for one who sought to gratify an inherent grudge by burning wool-sheds. The man, observing Tresswaite's intention, drew back and strained at the twisted cords, that were already stained with blood. It was clear that he did not care to revisit the scene which held such gruesome memories.

"God knows I didn't mean to kill him!" he said. "But we was sworn partners, and he had played me false."

But Tresswaite still remained unresponsive, only demanding that his lagging captive should lead him to the place without delay. The night had darkened considerably, and the occasional rumbles of thunder told that the storm was not far off; and Tresswaite felt his heart gladden at the sound, and as he rode on he even forgot the wretched cur who was working so incessantly at the knotted fibres that were gradually giving way. It was only when the man at length drew up beside a huddled heap that Tresswaite was recalled to himself. He dismounted and leant over the prostrate figure. In the darkness it was impossible to distinguish the features, though it could be noticed that the whole appearance of the figure bore the same unkempt, half-savage suggestion as his late companion. With some difficulty Tresswaite struck a match and, sheltering the flame in the hollow of his hand, examined the forbidding features, which were made the more repellent by the deep gash across the temple, which testified, in some measure at least, to the truth of the story. No doubt he had met his fate in fair fight—a fight, too, that had been to the death, bitter and merciless, with the silent, empty plain to drown the curses as these two men had fought like beasts of prey, with instincts scarcely more human. No wonder the

crime-stained wretch, spent and crushed, desired to shun the place which recalled so vividly that gruesome struggle. Surely there was no need for further evidence to justify his captor's sworn determination to avenge to the last degree that miscreant deed which had substituted for the result of years of strenuous toil and enterprise a few charred skeleton beams. As Tresswaite was about to turn away, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, for as the match flickered and fell from his fingers, a gleam caught the dead man's bared arm, and round it coiled the outline of a tattooed serpent. He struck another match and examined more closely the brilliantly coloured coils that were blistered and burnt by fire.

"What does it mean?" he exclaimed.

The man hesitated, as though the serpent possessed some mysterious significance of its own which he dared not reveal. He glanced at his late comrade, who had met his fate because he had proved false to its demands.

"The Sign of the Serpent," he said, with slow emphasis.

Tresswaite rose with a strange sensation of uncertainty. Gradually, but without any definite shape, there dawned upon him the possibility of an entirely new development. He held still another match over the lifeless arm and scanned it with closer scrutiny. Tanned and burnt though it was, there were the bruises and flesh-wounds of a struggle less recent than that in which he had met his death. Tresswaite waited as though he expected some further explanation.

"The Sign of the Serpent," repeated the man. "We had been pals till he set fire to your wool-shed, and we were the last of the Serpent Gang."

For some time they stood in silence, as Tresswaite realised that the man whom he had so resolutely sought for days lay dead at his feet, having paid the penalty of a broken pledge, bound though it was with the scarred coils of a tattooed serpent. The most extreme measures of the law could not have avenged his misdeeds more drastically. He had paid the price to the bitter end, and his white-livered inciters would learn of his fate and take heed, and whatever the obligations of this mysterious Serpent Gang might be, it was at least evident that no uncertain treatment awaited those who violated its laws. No doubt it was some offshoot of that brotherhood of sundowners who trudge on and on across the plains to nowhere, humping their swag in search of work, but hoping to find none, and seeking their food from the nearest squatter, who, to them, is a usurper, owning the best of the land and the wealth of the Golden Fleece. And this man, the last of the Serpent Gang, who had whined and pleaded so persistently for freedom, was a prisoner, waiting to be handed over to justice, having confessed his crime and laid it bare in all its ugliness. It was he who had avenged the burning of the wool-shed. What need was there for further vengeance? Had not the penalty been paid to the uttermost? Had he not borne enough without having to face the contemptuous publicity of a remorseless trial? Yet he was a murderer, a foe to his fellow-men. There should be no scruples, no tampering with sentiment, for the man had sinned. There was but one answer—justice. But what could justice do for him?

A vivid flash, followed by a crackling peal, which seemed to rend the very earth itself, left the plain in denser darkness, while the startled horse, pulling back, jerked on the worn fibres of the rope, which parted under the strain and fell limply down.

Tresswaite leapt into his saddle and forced his horse in the direction of the dark figure which had disappeared into the night. At intervals the outline of the crouching man appeared, almost brushing against the horse, only to be lost again, till at last it doubled back to vanish into the darkness, while the rain, settling into a steady downpour, blotted out all further sight. Tresswaite circled and groped through the night, until he realised the futility of prolonging the search. Then he turned again towards the homestead.

AT ONE AND AT ODDS

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "Minnows and Tritons," "Both Sides of the Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

WHEN Arthur Metcalfe left Cambridge, he found himself in a quandary. All the money that could be spared for his education had been spent, without, it seemed, qualifying him to earn a living. The Church was closed to him by his Free Church principles, and schoolmastering he disliked. From the cradle he had breathed the atmosphere of it, and he craved a change. His father—a fourteenth Wrangler—coached boys for Sandhurst, the universities, and the great public schools, and there were usually about a dozen boarders in the house. It was boarding charges rather than tuition fees that had enabled Mr. Metcalfe to send his son to Cambridge and his daughter to Lady Margaret Hall.

The only alternative to starting with boys of fifteen at the bottom rung of the business ladder was the Civil Service. In the competition for first-class appointments Arthur came out third, and was given a post in the Home Office. He arrived in London the Saturday before the Monday when he was to start work, and went at once to the lodgings that had been secured for him in the suburb of West Lawton.

When our curtain goes up, it discovers him in the gallery of the Lawton Hill Baptist Chapel, enjoying the fine musical service, and unconscious that this was a very special occasion. The minister, Oswald Osgoode—D.D. and M.A. London—had started life in a warehouse, and was concerned to make the lot of country-bred juniors less desolate than his own had been. The previous Sunday the good man had described the dreadful Sabbath that used to be his, separated from his parents, with no friendly door to open to him, and with hardly a room in which to sit. He asked each of his hearers that had a comfortable home to make a point next Sunday morning of speaking to some young solitary stranger, and taking him back to dinner. Who shall fix limits to the power of complete sincerity ? No one suspected how general had been the response to the preacher's kindly appeal.

Arthur, knowing nothing of this, was astounded, when he emerged from the gallery exit, to find rows of prosperous middle-aged householders clamouring for his patronage like hotel touts outside a railway terminus. These would-be hosts being more numerous than possible guests, a solitary young man had a wide choice, unless, like Arthur, he encountered at the outset a will stronger than his own, and was borne off willy-nilly. Pushing through the claimant philanthropists, they came upon a row of young women who were following the efforts of their fathers with interested eyes.

"Daddy will never get one for me unless he puts more pep into it," a tow-headed girl was saying to a glorious creature, easier to dream of than to describe. "Can you see your father, Kathleen ? "

"No; but trust papa to get what he wants. I shall have the very pick of the whole bunch."

Arthur's captor touched her upon the shoulder.

"Well, here's the pick of the bunch for you, then. He tells me his name is Metcalfe."

"Are you a stranger to West Lawton, Mr. Metcalfe ? " she asked, as they walked up the hill together.

"Quite. I arrived only yesterday. I

didn't know the London suburbs were so hospitable."

"Oh, this is nothing to most Sundays—quite an off day for us. Usually——" And she romanced amusingly.

When they reached The Limes, Arthur was welcomed charmingly by his hostess. Mr. Wood, however, at first was patronising. But at dinner it came out that Arthur's mother's sister had married one of Spurgeon's deacons, and, if you are a Baptist, a connection—even by marriage—with Spurgeon's Tabernacle cannot be treated as an inferior.

Arthur spent the whole day at The Limes, but saw little of his host until supper, a protracted meal because Mr. Wood sometimes forgot to carve while he was holding up his own career for his guest's emulation. He spoke of himself as other men speak of some loved parent who has passed away, and he even suggested regret for not having in the past sufficiently esteemed himself.

"I didn't realise it at the time, Mr. Metcalfe, but I can see now that a man who was invited at twenty-three—just about your own age—to the superintendence of a Sunday-school at Macclesfield must have had some unusual qualities."

Kathleen, who was Arthur's *vis-à-vis*, detected the smile which he thought he had controlled, and in a fury hurled a jam tart at him. The tart struck him squarely upon the chin, and ropes of raspberry jam fell upon his coat, a new one.

Kathleen read in his looks what a catastrophe this was.

"Oh, I am so sorry! But it will come off. There is hot water downstairs."

He followed her to the kitchen, and stood still while she rubbed away vigorously with soap and hot water.

"You can do this with good cloth," she said; "there won't be a trace to-morrow. I expect you hate me?"

Her face, as she spoke, was just below his, and he kissed her.

She gave a quick, upward glance of inquiry. There wasn't a suggestion either of resentment or of embarrassment.

Then she stood upright.

"Why did you do that?"

"I don't know. Why did you take it like that?"

"You mean, I ought to have flamed indignantly and rubbed vigorously at the spot with a pocket handkerchief?"

"I mean we both acted without thought, and not as we should have expected to. But I am very sorry."

"You need not be. I don't feel insulted. But you must never do it again. Have you ever kissed girls before?"

"Never. I have not been tempted to."

"It must have been what I was doing," said Kathleen musingly. "Do you kiss your mother when she smartens you up?"

"Always."

"Then that is how you kissed me—as a mother."

"Rubbish! How could I think of you as a mother?"

"Why not? You are only a child. I must be five years your senior."

In the very zenith of her splendid young womanhood every one of her years was then an asset.

"What a time you are down there, Kathleen! I wish to have prayers."

"Coming, Dad. Mother should not make her jam so thick."

When Arthur took his leave, the whole family came out into the hall.

"Good-bye," said Mr. Wood. "I can't do much for you, but I can give you a good man's blessing, and we have warrant for believing that that is not without value, although perhaps you young fellows nowadays may laugh at it."

"Not at all, sir. A good man's blessing—ripping sort of thing to possess."

Arthur felt that Kathleen's eye was on him, and he had not the slightest knowledge of what he was saying.

"And you can have a good girl's blessing from me."

"Kathleen! Please remember what day this is!"

"Be a good boy, dear," said Mrs. Wood, holding his hand, "and come to us whenever you feel lonely. It seems right to have a boy around the house. I should have liked a son of my own."

"Be careful, mother, or he will be wanting to kiss you," said Kathleen.

Kathleen so dominated Arthur's thoughts that he looked forward with curiosity to Friday evening, when he was to attend a "Musical" in Kensington, at the Glyn-Lidgetts, whose only child, Constance, had always been his ideal. His boyhood had been swept by gusts of calf-love for her. He had lost sight of her for three or four years, her father, the Hon. and Rev. Stephen Glyn-Lidgett, having given up his Suffolk living for a canonry of St. Paul's. He had rowed in the St. John's boat with Arthur's

father, who had reached Cambridge by the scholarship ladder from a secondary school in Lambeth. Glyn-Lidgett, too proud to ask a favour for himself, had touted shamelessly among his friends and connections—and the Glyn-Lidgetts are allied with half the peerage—for pupils for his friend.

When Arthur arrived, the "Musical" was in full swing, although his first impression, upon entering the drawing-room, was that he had intruded upon a preliminary rehearsal. A woman of lofty lineage (knowing his hostess's foibles, Arthur was sure that no commoner with such a voice would have been tolerated) was singing, and six future performers were trying to look as if their thoughts were not monopolised by their impending performances. Constance was at the piano. From an adjoining room came the roar of a conversational Niagara.

When she had congratulated the singer, Mrs. Glyn-Lidgett came across to Arthur. She was the daughter of a country solicitor, and had never realised that her marriage had given her a position that made social strivings unnecessary.

"I am so glad you have come. I am sorry I can't ask you to sing, because there is so much talent here to-night. But you will enjoy listening, and will not be interrupted by talkers. I have told everyone that this room is for music, and that there is a talking-room for those who must hear their own voices. Emily, you are not leaving us?"

"Send for me when I am to sing again. I simply must have a chat with the Canon." And, ignoring the reproachful glances of three coming solos, a recitation, and a mandoline duet, the great lady escaped. Constance gave Arthur a bright smile of welcome. She was persuading the heir-presumptive to the Glyn-Lidgett title to sing "The Bedouin's Love Song," which he had brought with him. When he had uttered his cry to the night winds, the Bedouin folded up his tents and stole noiselessly away to swell the conversational riot, where he displayed a strength of lung of which his song had conveyed no suggestion, being more audible now in the drawing-room than when singing there.

Under the restless supervision of his hostess, Arthur acted as call-boy, supplied an appreciable proportion of the audience, and turned over for the beautiful accompanist. Yes, Constance was beautiful It was a pleasure to study the lovely chiselled profile, and the way the dark head was set upon the slender neck. Too cold, perhaps, until she smiled, when it was like warm sunshine on a December day. Yes, and Kathleen was flaming June. As he stood beside the piano, he luxuriated in antitheses to express the contrasting and equal charms of the two girls.

When the time came for supper, Constance slipped her arm through his. Question yourself, dear reader, before you condemn him for being conscious that the slender fingers upon his coat-sleeve were those of an earl's grand-daughter.

"Like the old children's parties, Arthur, when I used to shut you off from all the prettiest girls."

"There is no plural, Constance, to prettiest girl."

Perhaps not, but there seemed to be a dual number henceforth.

Arthur made his bow to West Lawton society at a meeting of the Shakespeare Reading Club, held this month at The Limes, when "Two Gentlemen of Verona" was read, and he was given the part of Proteus. Society in the suburbs does not, as a rule, follow lines of sectarian cleavage. All the older residents who monopolised the large houses around the Common knew each other, and it was to this inner circle that Arthur was admitted. Kathleen distributed judiciously the scraps of knowledge she possessed — the marital relationship to Spurgeon's Tabernacle to those who would be impressed thereby; his First Class in Modern History to the intellectual; to the more sporting his half blues at hockey and water-polo. He was accepted without reserve; indeed, there was surprise that the Woods had a *protégé* so smart. The cut of his clothes, the tone of his voice, his unassertive self-confidence—all acquired from association with his father's aristocratic pupils—seemed to stamp this grandson of a Lambeth grocer as a bright visitor from some higher social world.

Arthur was asked everywhere, and wherever he went there was Kathleen. She attended even private dances, although she disapproved of waltzing, and would not stand up except for the squares. She went to protest, and argued that her sitting out all the round dances was more effective than a dozen sermons from dowdy spinsters who could never have got partners. No one could say "Sour grapes" to her. And then her frocks! Not unconnected with her strange compromise—although she did not

suspect this—was the consideration that, if she did not attend dances, no one would ever see her very beautiful arms. The controversy was carried on with a singular freedom from rancour. Confirmed, one might say bigoted, waltzers would sit out the most entrancing numbers to be instructed in her singular views.

"I wish Kathleen would convince girls that they do not wish to waltz, and not my best men," hostesses would exclaim. But they always kissed her when she arrived—there are some girls that every mother of girls kisses—and a dance seemed to lack something in the absence of this beautiful haunter of the stairs. Arthur's presence



"She burst into uncontrollable sobbing."

was a boon to hostesses. He became Kathleen's first convert, and, having him, she did not seek others. They were a little sect in themselves. In the course of three winters one is afraid to say how many hours they spent together in conservatories and on stairs. Of course he met her elsewhere—at tennis clubs, church sociables, and parties—but it was at dances she seemed most to belong to him. If it had not been for his occasional Sundays with the Glyn-Lidgetts, where Constance became kinder every visit, he would have proposed to Kathleen a dozen times. She was a dear—he could not think of her without this term—but Diana softening has a wonderful fascination.

Things ran on in this way until the third summer, when a week with Kathleen at a Scotch hydro precipitated the crisis. The Woods did not know of Arthur's intention to join them. He arrived a week before their return. Two West Lawton girls, the tow-headed Wilson twins, were with her when she caught sight of him. She clung to them, and Arthur knew that his coming was a terrible mistake. He could never get her to himself, and when she was in a group it was not she who opened it to admit him. The days as they dragged by brought no amelioration. Arthur took to exploring the country, and conceived a dislike of the more sterile scenery of Scotland which he never afterwards lost. Given a thoroughly uninteresting hillside, poor soil, and stones, does it become grandeur by being extended upwards to fourteen or fifteen hundred feet? He thought of submitting this to Kathleen's disapproval, only to realise, with a pang, that he had lost her ear. He felt as a fairly prolific author would if suddenly denied all possibility of publication. For well-nigh three years he had racked his brains to find occasion for her irresistible laugh, and now habit kept him on his course. He prepared witticisms that she would refuse to hear, conversational openings for *têtes-à-tête* that would be denied. He was very miserable.

The last evening but one of her stay Kathleen came down to dinner in a sitting-out frock. In the interval before the start of the dancing she came upon Arthur on the verandah, studying the large raised map of the district.

"I should think you must know that by heart, Arthur. You are not very sociable. You go away all day by yourself, and devote your evenings to this, instead of to your friends."

"Have I a friend?"

"At least you might let us profit by your knowledge. Can't you take us into that little wiggly slit? That is where I wish to go."

"That is a particularly narrow valley; there would be room for only a very limited 'us' in there." He measured it upon the map carefully. "I don't think it would hold more than two."

"Well, you know the district. If you are sure that is so, I will come alone. Shall we meet here at nine-fifteen to-morrow?

"How dreadfully gregarious music makes people!" said Kathleen, as they paused to look in on the crowded concert-hall.

"Music is very demoralising," said Arthur.

"But it ought not to be," said Kathleen severely, as they seated themselves half-way up the main staircase. "Why should dancers be allowed a monopoly of sitting out? Is there any reason why people should not sit out songs and sonatas, for example?"

"I should say there is every reason why they should."

"I was the first to assert the right of Puritans to the stairs. Wasn't it Spurgeon who said there was no reason why the devil should be allowed to have all the best things?"

"Or was it the devil who objected to all the best things being given to Spurgeon?"

"Well, I am determined to show that a girl who does not waltz can have just as good a time as the others, and wear as expensive frocks."

The dance wore on, but they did not change their positions on the staircase, which, in the intervals between the dances, was crowded by flushed and perspiring couples. Once they had to draw on one side to let Jo Wilson and her partner pass through.

"Keep up the protest, dear," said Jo.

"Is this valley we are going to very lovely?" said Kathleen the next morning, when they were clear of the grounds.

"Lovely? It's beastly! All the scenery round here is."

"The Pathetic Fallacy?"

"Perhaps. I admit it looks less horrid this morning. Do you realise that we can't get back for lunch?"

"Can't we? Then what have you brought?"

She listened closely to his enumeration.

"How greedy men are!" she remarked contentedly.

They reached their destination, and ate their lunch on the rocks.

"Dear girl!" said Arthur, putting his hand over hers.

"How are you finding the scenery now?"

"Glorious."

"I want you to remember these hills as especially splendid and beautiful, and when you recall them——" Why did she find it so hard to continue?

"'Add the gleam. The light that never was on sea or land?'" suggested her companion.

"For me it is the light that never will be again:

'The stream will not flow and the hills will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.'"

"Poor Susan!" he said, giving a squeeze to her palm, and a tear fell upon the back of his hand. "Don't be so blue about leaving to-morrow. You are not poor Susan really. You will often return to the hills."

"You may, perhaps. I think you will. But not I. It all ends for me to-day. And I am so young to be done with it all. I am really so young!"

She burst into uncontrollable sobbing.

"Nothing is ending, Kathleen, dear. Everything is just beginning. You will marry me, won't you?"

She sat up, wiping her eyes. "No, Arthur, I can never marry you."

"But you love me, don't you?"

"Oh, so much, so much!"

"Then why?"

"Do you remember the first Sunday night, when I said you were a child?"

"Just because you were five years older."

"There, you see, you remember. That shows you felt it was important."

"Not a bit, not a bit," said Arthur stoutly.

"Actually it is nearer six years than five. I was thirty-one yesterday."

Despite himself, Arthur winced. Thirty has a terrible sound to twenty-five.

"It does not matter."

"Have you heard about my eldest sister, Miriam?"

"You don't think I am like your brother-in-law?"

"I know you are not, dear. You would never give me pain. But in ten years' time you would regret that your boyish fancy had not turned to a young girl, who would have grown old beside you."

"What nonsense, Kathleen!"

"Are you sure there is not a younger girl in your heart to-day?"

Arthur gasped: the shot was so unexpected. No, he was not sure.

Kathleen walked down to the stepping-stones that crossed the brook, and knelt down, bathing her eyes.

The young man flung himself full length on the turf. His dread of an engagement while he was so uncertain of himself was lost for the moment in his shame at having failed Kathleen at her first appeal. She must have noticed. And then he felt her stroking his head.

"Dear Arthur, don't give way so. In a few years you will thank me for refusing you."

Then she had not noticed. He sat up dry-eyed.

"How wretched everything is! When did you get this idea of the disparity in our ages being a bar?"

"The Sunday when papa brought you home, when you kissed me in the kitchen. I loved you that second. I looked up at you, and my heart accepted you. After you left I had this out with myself, but I didn't see why we couldn't be great friends. It meant so little to you then."

"But not afterwards."

"You became fond of me, as I wished you to, but I always felt that you did not mean to propose. It wasn't until you followed me down here that I thought differently."

Arthur thumped the turf. What a fool he had been to come! What a miserable donkey! All might have run on so pleasantly.

"Is that why you were so horrid—to stop me? Then why did you change?"

"Because you were so miserable. And you looked at me with such reproach. I could not bear it, Arthur, I really couldn't. So I thought it better you should propose, and know why I could not marry you. The mischief was done."

"Confound it!"

A spent golf ball had struck the young man in the back. There were no links near. It meant that a walking party was approaching, playing cross-country golf.

"Kathleen, what shall we do? If we are not to be engaged, we don't want everyone talking."

"I believe I am quite presentable. We will leave it now. I will hear all you have to say, but not to-day, dear. I did not

realise how hard this was going to be. Hello-o-o ! "

She yodelled and waved her hand, as the Wilson twins, flourishing cleeks and followed by a rabble of hatless young men, streamed over the crest of the hill. Before they got within earshot she turned towards him again.

" Oh, Arthur, you did not kiss me ! "

By Kathleen's request the following morning Arthur did not see her off. From the top of a hill he saw the train bearing her away from him. In his pocket was a letter received that morning from Constance, demanding his portrait in exchange for one of herself which she had given him ten days before in the following circumstances. They had sat together in her garden.

" Well, Arthur, have you anything to tell me ? " she had said, with a curious intentness.

" Of what nature ? "

" A friend who has been staying in West Lawton told me you were engaged. She said it was a perfect romance."

" That is what it is."

" Then you are not engaged ? "

" Of course not."

" I thought it was rather strange you hadn't told me, seeing that we used to make mud pies together."

" You shall certainly be told, Constance, if I ever make the plunge. Perhaps you will be the first to know."

This was daring, but Arthur thought the " ever " made it safe.

They were all together in the drawing-room after evensong.

" Mother, I think Arthur would like to see the latest photograph of papa." She fetched a folding silver stand containing cabinets of her parents. Lying between them was one of herself. Arthur slipped it into his breast-pocket, and their eyes met. And Constance evidently did not mean the flirtation to end there. Really, thought Arthur, as he mooned across the hillside, it would be the best solution if Kathleen's scruples held. But they would not survive another personal appeal. He felt sure of that. Miserably as he had acquitted himself at the stepping-stones, she would have given way if the Wilsons had not intervened. So Arthur returned to the hydro, and made his final appeal by letter, and received a definite and final answer—No.

Well, that chapter was closed. Perhaps he had acted badly, but when he was back in West Lawton, he found that no one seemed to think so, which made him lenient towards himself. He felt relieved to have come off from a dangerous situation so lightly, but not very happy. The Glyn-Lidgetts were on the Continent, or he would have sought consolation in that direction. Everything had turned out for the best, but that best was not very good. Sometimes he would sit looking up at the portraits of the two girls that smiled upon him from the extremes of his mantelpiece. He thought of them as planets drawing him in opposite directions, their combined effect being to keep him safely in his orbit. The withdrawal of one influence might send him whirling—whither ? The idea alarmed him, because he doubted the possibility now of a union with either ; with Kathleen, because he had let the spring-tide go, and with Constance because of her social superiority to himself.

When the Law Courts reopened after the Long Vacation, Kathleen's eldest sister, Miriam, obtained her separation, and came to live permanently with her parents. People always said that Miriam looked younger than her age, without having been told what her age was, an all-pervasive but undefinable hardness having made them ascribe to her more years than those to which physique confessed. Arthur hated her, for no better reason that he could give than her inability to control her constantly twitching eyelids. On the rare occasions when they met, it was as open enemies.

When the Canon and his wife returned from their prolonged tour, Constance was not with them. She had eloped with her cousin Reginald, to whom she had been secretly married for some months and engaged for many years. When she was eighteen, there had been a fuss about Reggie, but her father had put his foot down firmly, and the whole thing was thought to have blown over. The Canon objected upon principle to the marriage of first cousins, while self-interest resented a son-in-law who would have to be supported.

Well, that let out Constance. It was in the first months of her marriage—and a marriage of love, apparently—that she had resented the idea of Arthur being engaged, or of any abatement in his boyish devotion to herself.

Arthur tore up her photograph, and, doing so, saw Kathleen's, and recalled his planetary fancy. He wondered if there were anything in it. He examined himself during the day. No, the loss of one friend had not made him

in love with the other. Coming home in the train, the same question brought the same answer. Certainly he was not going to suffer. He found himself repeating this in the same brisk way poor travellers do on board a steamer before they lose sight of land.

In the evening he was very restless, and shortly before ten o'clock went out. Crossing the Common, he saw a light in Kathleen's window. At twenty minutes to eleven it went out. Suppose Kathleen went out of his life like that—what would it mean to him ?

It was past one when he returned to his lodgings, and he was without his latchkey. His landlady, as she was descending the stairs, was phrasing a reproof that should be at once gentle and severe, but it was not given.

" Oh, my dear boy, what *has* happened ? "

In the morning the situation looked less desperate. *Of course he was in love*, and it was idle to pretend that his chances of winning Kathleen were as favourable as they had been in August—Miriam's presence, for one thing, must have strengthened her scruples enormously—but if the opposition had increased, so also had his own force of appeal. Well, he would soon know. Kathleen and Mrs. Wood took it in turns to stay at home Sunday evening, and to-morrow was Kathleen's turn.

Knocking at the Woods' door, Arthur had the feeling of tightness about the chest that had once attended a frightful form of indigestion in which he had nearly lost his life. The sides of his chest seemed crushed together, and it was only by an audible effort that he could draw his breath.

The door was opened by Miriam.

" Why have you come here ? "

" You can see."

" Go away now, and I will tell nobody of your visit. You have had a lucky deliverance ; be thankful for it."

" No, no. I must speak to Kathleen."

" Well, I will tell her, but I shall advise her not to see you."

She left Arthur standing in the hall, and entered the dining-room. After a momentary hesitation, he followed her.

" Oh, Kathy, you can't send me away unheard ! "

" No, I can't treat you like that, Arthur ; but it would have been better if you had not come."

They went together into the drawing-room, which was bitterly cold, and again Arthur had to fight for breath.

" You are not ill, Arthur ? "

" No."

She lit the gas fire and then sat on the sofa, waiting for him to recover himself, her fingers playing with the leather fringe of an Indian pillow.

" I can't think with you fidgeting like that ! " cried Arthur irritably, and took possession of her hands.

She let them lie in his, and her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

" It is no good, Arthur. It is all useless. Oh, why did you come ? "

" You said I might speak to you again."

" That was two months ago, and you wrote. I was expecting you, and you wrote."

" I was a fool, and I have been punished. You won't ruin my life for that ? You still love me, Kathy, don't you ? "

" More than ever, dear, I am afraid."

" You would have given way if I had come in August."

" Who told you that ? "

" You admitted it by reproaching me for not coming."

" Did I reproach you, Arthur ? I had no right to. All the fault is mine."

" I could have convinced you then : why can't I now ? "

" You would not have convinced me. I should still have thought a marriage with a man so much my junior unfair to him."

" But you would have given way."

" I think so, although I had resolved not to. Why I wearied so to hear your knock was because subconsciously I longed to be swept off my feet and made to achieve my happiness at the cost, ultimately, of your own. You did not suspect I was so selfish and weak."

" I have been all selfishness and meanness, Kathleen ; you have been strong and kind."

" If you had realised your strength, Arthur, you could have won me by the stepping-stones."

" You mean if I had done what you said I omitted ? "

" Even that."

She seemed to drop into his arms.

" You can't draw back now, Kathy. Nothing can part us now."

" I wanted you to kiss me like that. My life will have no more love-making. I had to know that I was deeply loved. I am glad now you came to-night—oh, so glad ! All the bitterness is gone : there is only

sorrow, and that I can bear. I am glad it means so much to you. I was afraid it didn't. I want you to suffer with me. Does that sound wicked ? "

" You are killing me, talking like that ! Nothing is changed since August. Why should I not win you now ? "

" Listen, Arthur. When Miriam came back to live here, mother and I expected endless stories of her wrongs. She hasn't spoken in that way at all, but says that she deserted Walter by passing into a tired middle age. His boyishness to-day astounds her, and there are a hundred points where she fails him. When she let Walter over-persuade her into this marriage—which she always thought was wrong—there seemed no gap between them. To-day there is a generation. She implores me not to sin against the light as she did. So, Arthur, dear, although it breaks my heart, no, no, no ! "

With every " No " was a kiss that stabbed him like a dagger.

Arthur hurled himself against her resolution like a captured wild bird dashing itself against the bars of a cage, falling exhausted and stunned, only to revive and renew the terrible struggle again, and again, and again.

Mr. Wood, who had returned from chapel, was for interfering.

" The boy shall have his chance, George," said his wife. " You were a lover yourself once."

At last they had to interfere and send him away. Kathleen flung her arms round him for a last embrace, and then, with a dreadful cry, rushed upstairs to her room.

It was all over. Even Arthur recognised this.

" I am glad she held out," said Miriam. " I wish I had been as firm."

" You must not come here again, Arthur," said Mrs. Wood, who was crying unrestrainedly, " and I think you ought to leave West Lawton."

" How hard you are upon me ! "

" I ! Why, I have been on your side all through. It is Miriam who has parted you. I wish I had not let her come here. I wanted you for my son, and I believe you and Kathy would have been very happy together. Why *did* you write that letter ? Why didn't you come when she expected you ? "

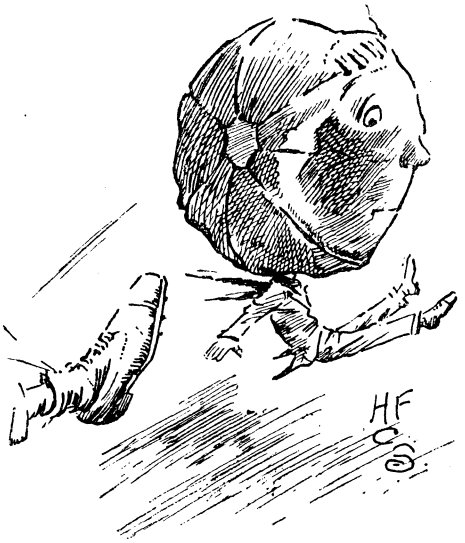
A TOWN PASTORAL.

IN clear-aired city gardens
The crocus fires amain,
And boughs that Winter hardens,
They have their joy again.

A song-bird calls, a rover
With Eden in his throat,
Nor Eden shall discover
A clearer nesting-note.

Come, Phyllis of the city,
And you her Shepherd, come !
Here Spring alights for pity,
And Love shall be at home.

ERIC CHILMAN.



"He lifted his foot, and I found myself in the street."

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FOOTBALL

Recorded and Illustrated by

H. F. CROWTHER SMITH

I. The Kick-Off.

I BELIEVE I got the idea of adopting football as a career from a hint my father gave me when, as quite a lad, I first left home. It was a very strong hint—in fact, it was really a kick.

We had had words. He told me to clear out. I wouldn't. So he lifted his foot, and I found myself in the street.

But *I* didn't care. Even as a youngster I had a hide like a rhinoceros, so this hefty kick from dad's boot didn't worry *me*. Quite the contrary; it fired me with ambition. In that one brief second father's foot had put into my thick-skinned noddle the idea that Nature intended me to find fame and fortune on the football field.

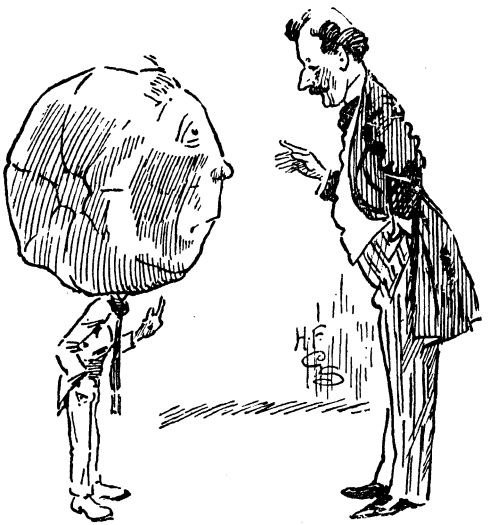
But at this time I was in rotten condition. My face was thin and flabby, not round and firm as it ought to be. So, before anything else, I must get fit. Turning over in my mind ways and means, I tramped aimlessly along the streets until, by a bit of luck, I found myself bang opposite Harridges, where they sell everything to do with football, from the referee's whistle to the goal-posts. I walked in.

Though I must have presented a very forlorn and ragged appearance, the manager, Mr. Goodfellow, was most kind and sympathetic.

I told him that I wanted to get *in touch* (I can't help using football terms) with someone who would at once recognise that my natural build—especially above the shoulders—was phenomenal.

"Don't judge of me in my present flabby condition," I added. "Give me a chance to get fit, and there will be no club in the kingdom that, once having given me a trial, will ever want to play without me."

It was now the manager's turn to talk. "Unquestionably and indubitably," he began, "Nature has endowed you with a very exceptional formation of the head, suggesting qualities invaluable on the football field. I noticed that directly you came in. Your present flabby state is nothing. I propose to put that right at once with a slight injection of nitrogen and oxygen. Take a seat. I'm not going to hurt you."



"'Don't judge of me in my present flabby condition,'"



"This operation 'put the wind up' me terribly."

Whereupon he produced a large instrument like a bicycle pump, which he inserted in my forehead.

This operation "put the wind up" me terribly at first; but after a bit I felt much better, and when I looked at myself in the glass, I was astonished. I had filled out until my cheeks were beautifully firm and plump.

"You were rather run-down," said Mr. Goodfellow. "These fresh-air injections have a wonderfully bracing effect on such *cases* as yours."

"You're right," I said. "I feel as fit as a fiddle already—so fit, in fact, that I'm bursting to show what I can do on the football field straightaway. Can't you help me?"

"As a matter of fact," he replied, "we get a good many inquiries from clubs for players of your build. Only this morning the secretary of the Freebooters rang up to ask if we could send them somebody for their match this afternoon, but——"

"Then send me," I interrupted.

"But," he went on, "you've never played a game of Soccer before in your life. They won't thank me for sending them an absolute novice. Do you really think you could fill the vacancy?"

"Can a duck swim?" was my airy reply.

"Well, anyhow, you look the part, so I'll risk it, and ring them up to say you're coming. By the by, what's your name?"

"Bob Leatherhead," said I.

The manager smiled. "I might have guessed that from looking at you. Though 'there's nothing like leather,' you can't go down like that. I'll fit you out with the proper kit at my own expense, and you must be down at the ground ready to play at three o'clock."

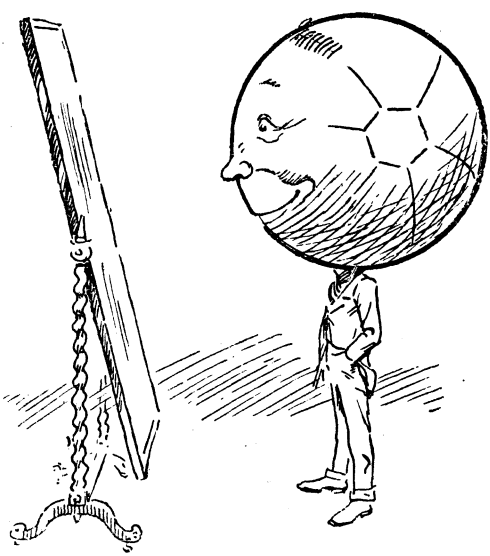
Ready to play! Why, I was so excited I felt I couldn't wait till three o'clock. In all my long football career I think that was the most thrilling day for me. And when presently I stood up for the first time in football kit, I could almost feel my head swelling.

The manager then gave me a small bag to carry my kit and the injection pump. He told me to use it whenever I felt run-down.

He was the best friend I've ever had. He knew I was hard up, and, as I said "Good-bye," he pressed a couple of Bradburys into my hand. It was not "Good-bye," though, you may be sure. I told him I should never forget him for all he had done for me, and you will see later how I was able to repay his kindness.

Shortly after arriving at the ground I heard a cheery voice behind me: "Are you Leatherhead? Ah, I thought so. Awfully good of you to come down and help us." It was Shuter, the Freebooters' captain. "We're up against a very hot team—the Occasionals—and the match is always one of the hardest of the season. But you look fit to stand any amount of knocking about."

I told him I was in the pink of condition, and very glad of the chance of a good game.



"When I looked at myself in the glass, I was astonished."

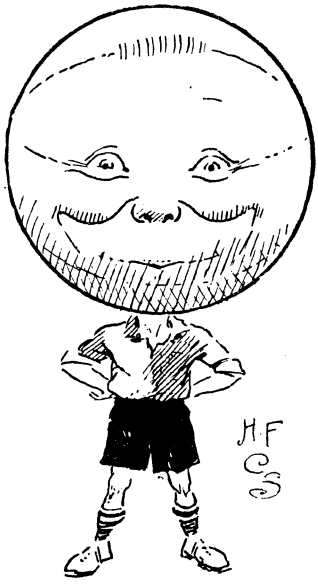
Then, as the other members of the team appeared, I was introduced to them.

Ten minutes later, as the clock was striking three, I took up my position instinctively in the centre of the ten-yards circle, the referee blew his whistle, and I was away.

As I believe this is the first time that a player of such vital importance to the game has written his life-story, I should like to give you an impression of my feelings during those first few minutes.

I seemed to see nothing but large boots all around me. Then I felt a succession of kicks raining down on every part of my cranium. For a moment I was somewhat dazed, but, quickly recovering myself, I began to settle down and take a keen interest in the game.

To relieve the pressure, I arranged that our centre-forward should pass me out to the wing, and together we made down the field at top speed.



"I could almost feel my head swelling."

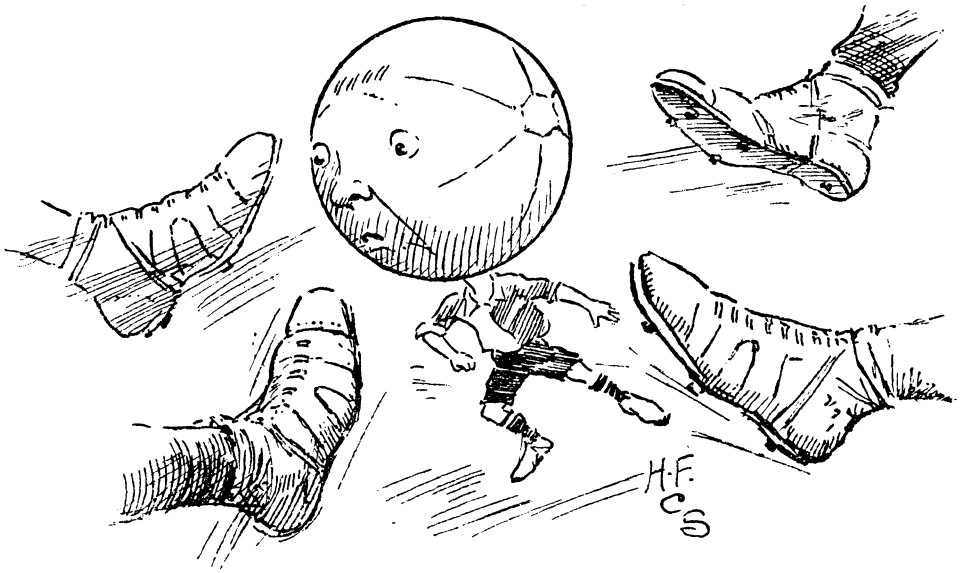
Our progress, however, was stayed when we neared the goal area by my getting a big "biff" from the boot of a burly back. The shock was so terrific that I lost consciousness, but the swift rush through the keen air quickly revived me.

I was not long in discovering that the Freebooters' forwards were a clever combination, and, though the Occasionals' backs were very strong, I felt that finding my way into the net was only a matter of time.

My chance came after a "corner." Just before this I nearly scored, but from lack of experience I misjudged the reach of the goal-keeper, who just managed to push me over the cross-bar and concede a "corner."

When I left the corner, I timed myself so accurately that I alighted right at the feet of our captain, Shuter. Seeing that I was a bit excited, he steadied me down and passed me back to the inside right. This player, practically unmarked and with a clear goal, sent me very hard and low towards the net.

Dodging a couple of backs who tried to head me off, and swerving past the hefty hands of the "goalie," I scored high up in the corner and fell exhausted to the ground. I was helped out to the centre again, sore about the head, but supremely happy.

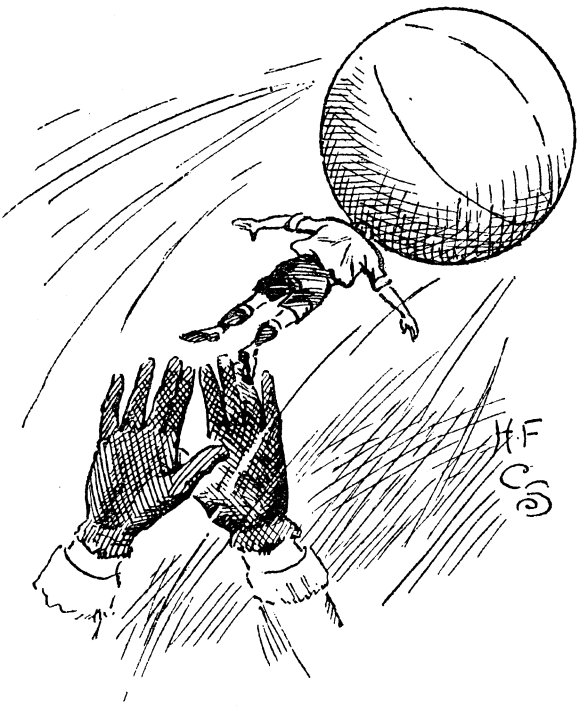


"I seemed to see nothing but large boots all around me."

This was the only goal of the match; for though I could have scored again, to be candid, I was too done. I therefore contented myself with avoiding the net whenever an opponent tried to put me there.

After the match Shuter thanked me, not only for coming down to play, but for winning the match for them. He prophesied a brilliant football career for me.

"You are the finest *all-round* player I've seen for a long time," he said. "You have great pace, quick anticipation of a player's intentions, and that essential knack of



"Swerving past the hefty hands of the goalie."

combining with the footwork of the forwards—especially in front of goal."

This was such a splendid testimonial that I asked him to put it in writing for me, which he very kindly did. I thanked him, told him I had thoroughly enjoyed the game, and hoped we should meet again.

II. Nearing the Goal—of My Ambition.

Before relating the steps by which I quickly rose from my initial success with amateurs to a long and brilliant series of successes as a professional, I must let you into a secret.

You know that all players of my kind require the injection pump before they can take any part in a game, that its effect is only very temporary, and, as a rule, we enjoy "a short life and a gay one."

But the injection outfit which Mr. Goodfellow gave me contained some marvellous elixir of his own discovery—extract of thyroid gland, or something, I think it was. This elixir produced for me, not only rejuvenescence, but actual renascence. By its use I became a hardy perennial, and for every match I went on the field a new creature, with a new skin, hard and evenly distributed, proof of my perfect physical state beneath it.

Small wonder, then, that I was so much sought after, and my transfers involved handsome sums of four figures.

And now, having told you this—which is, of course, strictly *entre nous*—I want to have a heart-to-heart talk with the football-loving public.

Though everyone would probably agree that I am indispensable to the game, not one realises that I entirely control each match I play in and influence its result. Yet the roar which goes up from thousands of throats after I have entered the net is never intended for *me*.

Just think of the injustice of this! When I have dodged the opposing forwards, swerved round the legs of the halves, wriggled from the clutches of the backs, and then adjusted myself to such a nicety on the instep of my centre-forward that all he has to do is to shoot hard at the goal—for I bluff the goal-keeper and find the net—it is a little unfair that he gets all the applause and I get none.

I'm not grumbling, and I don't blame anybody, because up till now the public have never heard my point of view of the game. Now that they know differently, perhaps they will appreciate me more, and include me in their applause when they see me hurling myself into the net.

* * * * *

But to resume my story. After the Freebooters' match I went straight back to my kind friend, Mr. Goodfellow, the manager at Harridges.

He was delighted to hear of my success, and when I showed him Shuter's testimonial, he said: "This is a very valuable tribute



"When the opposing back looked dangerous, I would shout to 'Wally,' 'See you later!' and with that puzzling spin of mine I would twist round behind the back"

from such a famous amateur. Shuter is the old Carthusian and Cambridge Blue, and has played for England on more than one occasion. If you want to take up the game professionally, this will go a long way to help you."

I then suggested that if I was going to achieve the success which Shuter prophesied, Mr. Goodfellow ought to share it, for it was he who had "discovered" me.

"The suggestion is a very sound one," he replied, "and although I need hardly say I never looked for any reward, it would certainly benefit the sports department of my firm to let the public know that we found you."

So we came to a business arrangement.

A week later I was given a trial game for Kickshaw, and afterwards had several matches with the reserve team. Then one morning I heard from Mr. Goodfellow that I had been signed on for Kickshaw. It was a proud day for me, not only because I felt my skill had been recognised, but because I should now draw a salary and be able to repay my friend Mr. Goodfellow for his great kindness.

At Kickshaw I quickly made a name, scoring two goals in the first match against New Jersey. Altogether, I had scored thirty-two goals for my club in four months.

This record attracted the attention of the Hottentot Hamspurs directors, and, at a nice substantial figure, I was transferred to this popular club.

It was here that "Wally" Fanden and I proved such a priceless combination, and many a goal we scored together. We understood each other's game perfectly. Often, when the opposing back looked dangerous, I would shout to "Wally," "See you later!" and with that puzzling spin of mine I would twist round behind the back, where the nimble Pavlova-like foot



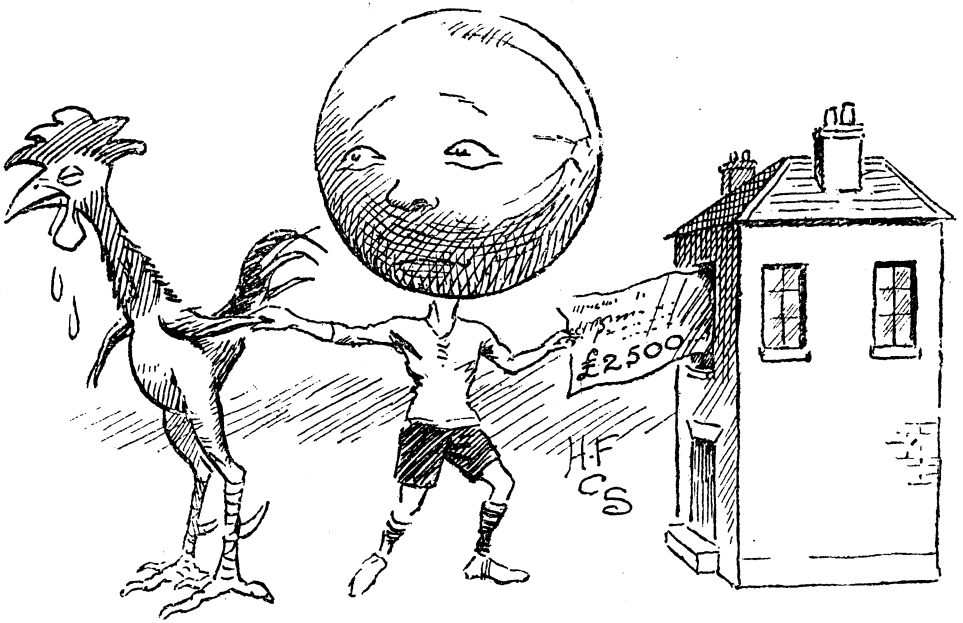
"I wriggled from the clutches of the back."

of "Wally" picked me up again and I, as likely as not, scored.

Very few "goalies" could stop me. My swerve and pace so baffled them that my net score (if I may so put it) for the season was sixty-four goals.

As a consequence, my name was on every player's lips. Leatherhead of Harridges was—though I says it what shouldn't—the idol of the football world; and so pleased was the firm with my success that Mr. Goodfellow was made a director. He was a regular spectator at the ground, where he always had a seat reserved for him.

Many people are rabid opponents of the transfer system. Whatever fault they find with it, I can only say it suited me very well, for the following season the Maisonnette acquired my services for the handsome fee of £2,500.



Cartoon representing my transfer from the Hamspurs to the Maisonnette.

The transfer caused much comment at the time, and a cartoon (reproduced) appeared in one of the papers. But (if I may say so) I afterwards proved that the Maisonnette directors had not over-estimated my value.

Now I was all among the stars, for I had the assistance of such fine players as Tungton, Boots, Studd, and Dandy Drake; while as opposition I learnt the value of men like Inkington, Joe McShriek, Swetter, and Knickers, and discovered the difficulty of finding the net when Purr was guarding it.

III. Final Cup Ties.

I WISH I had the space to relate in detail my many wonderful games with the Maisonnette, but I must be content to give you a short account of the two Final Cup Ties that I played in.

The first was at the House of Mirrors, when, after many stubbornly fought games, we found Rendwater our opponents in the Final.

At the start of the game there were far too many free kicks for fouls and off-side, and it took me some time to steady my team down. Then I worked up the crowd to a high state of excitement by purposely only just avoiding the net on several occasions during the first half.

In the second half our goal-keeper, Tuffen, had to go off the field. In reporting the match, one paper amused me by referring to the many chances which Rendwater had during Tuffen's absence, and mentioned Hacker and Tripp as each missing absolute "gifts." Any more flagrant example of how my share in preventing those shots from finding the net was entirely ignored, one cannot imagine.

I had determined during Tuffen's retirement to render any attack on our goal by

Rendwater fruitless, and whenever an attempt was made by our opponents' forwards to score, I dodged the net.

When Tuffen returned, I rallied our men, and they seemed to guess instinctively that I intended to change the complexion of the game. Without "playing to the gallery"—a loathsome practice—I always consider my spectators. For this reason I manoeuvred myself so that we were conceded a corner, for a well-directed corner kick has a specially spicy flavour of excitement about it.

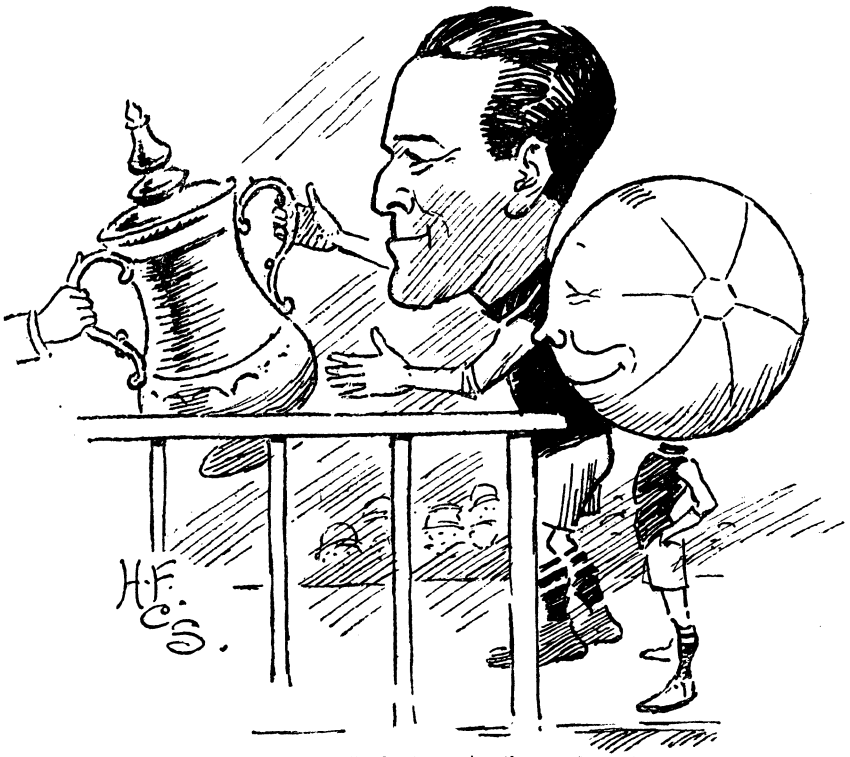


"Boots sent me exactly where I had directed him."

In this case Boots sent me exactly where I had directed him, and; finding Beardmore almost unmarked, I combined with him to score the only goal of the match. This was our fifth win in six Cup Finals.

One other comment I must make, in self-defence. A newspaper stated that ten minutes after the kick-off "the football lost some of its crispness."

Now, regarding some cases, this may be true, but in my own I had taken such care of myself that I went on the field fit and



"I went up with Dandy Drake to receive the cup from the Prince."

hard all over. How otherwise could I have kept in the condition which enabled me to win the coveted cup for my club?

* * * * *

My last appearance in a Cup Tie Final was that memorable occasion last April, when we beat Footersfield by a goal—scored in the first quarter of an hour of an extra half-hour's play.

Tuffen, Easton, Boots, and Dribbler, who were with me in the team that beat Rendwater, played as if they were seven years younger than they were then.

Here I repeated the same tactics that I had adopted at the House of Mirrors. First I would pretend to go into the net for our opponents, and then, scampering away towards their goal, I made the crowd think that I was going to score for us, but at the last second let Little clear me. In this way the spectators were kept on the tiptoe of excitement.

But, to tell the truth, it was entirely my fault that that extra half-hour had to be played. Just on time I had determined that Trotter should put me in the net; but in coming to his foot I mistimed my movements, so that he was unable to get the full force of his boot on the centre of my cranium. Not having sufficient pace, I was therefore unable to beat Little, who punched me out.

The goal scored during extra time was from a corner kick. It was said to be a lucky goal. Well, here are the facts.

I left Shinguard's foot at a great pace, and was dropping right in front of Little, when I pretended to make use of the Footersfield centre-half's head to take off from into the net. Seeing this, the defence moved in this direction. But I suddenly swerved to the feet of young Valance. As I felt the meshes of the net brushing against my back hair, a mighty roar rent the air, and Maisonnette had won the Cup for the sixth time.

I said in the earlier part of my story that the most thrilling day in my football career was when I stood up for the first time in football kit; but it was certainly equalled when, at the conclusion of that last Cup Final, I went up with Dandy Drake to receive the cup from the Prince.

Since then I have received International honours, and I would like to have told you how I managed twice to beat Stopitt, the Irish goal-keeper; but I fear I must keep it for another time.

WIMPOLE'S CHAIR

By ARCHIBALD MARSHALL

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

IT was just the chair that a largely-built man would have chosen out of a dozen others for an after-luncheon nap. These are not so common, even in well-furnished clubs, as might be supposed. In fact, in clubs too well furnished they are hardly to be found, for they must have attained a certain state of maturity, almost of shabbiness, before they woo each part of the frame entrusted to their embrace to the sweetest repose. And for a large man there must be just that little extra lavishness of space and curve which is apt to be discouraged by a standardising age. All honour, then, to the craftsman who laid down the lines of this creation in solid wood, springy horsehair, and supple leather, which the passing years had only adapted more perfectly to his generous design.

It was already well worn when I joined the club nearly twenty years ago. Old Wimpole claimed to have slept in it regularly every afternoon, when he was in London, for over twenty years before that. He attributed the fact that at the age of seventy-two he was active in mind, and, in spite of his weight, active in body, and could eat what he liked, and drink what he liked, to his habit of what he called his afternoon doss; and he would sometimes wax almost lyrical in praise of the particular chair which had long since by tacit consent been dedicated to his slumbers. It had never been recovered, though by this time it was put to shame by all the other chairs and couches in the room. Wimpole interviewed the House Committee every year before the club was closed for cleaning and repairs, and extracted a definite promise. No risks must be run. If he returned from his annual holiday—which he always took during the month of closing—to find the old chair renovated, he should resign his membership.

Ours was a friendly club, and not a very large one. Most of its regular frequenters knew one another more or less, and nearly all of them knew Wimpole. But he had, of course, his own particular circle of friends, and there were those outside it whom he did not care for. He did not care particularly for the little group through whom Ponting, the rubber magnate, was introduced to the club, and he did not care at all for Ponting, who seemed to think that his money gave him a right to behave as if his membership had lasted thirty years when it had actually lasted about thirty days. In a club such as ours, as in a school or a regiment, a man has to prove himself to be the right sort before he is taken into full companionship. He must keep quiet just at first, and not try to push things. Ponting pushed from the beginning, and Wimpole was not the only member who wished he had been blackballed, and said so.

Ponting was a large man, too, and shared Wimpole's taste for an afternoon nap. But whereas Wimpole spent an hour or so after luncheon talking to his friends, or joining in a game of pool, only advanced affectionately towards the king of easy-chairs when the club began to empty for the afternoon, and then slept the light sleep of perfect health and conscience for about half an hour, Ponting would throw his unwieldy frame back in his chair when he had finished his after-luncheon imbibings, and settle down to an hour's fat liver-impelled slumber, his mouth open and his face plethoric. He breathed heavily, but just didn't snore. If he had done that, to the annoyance of other members, he could have been requested to sleep elsewhere. As it was, he simply looked rather disgusting.

As was perhaps natural, Ponting preferred Wimpole's chair to any other in the club. He was not so regular in his attendance as Wimpole, but whenever he did come he appropriated the chair after a heavy lunch, and occupied it for the better part of the afternoon. Wimpole lunched at one o'clock, and was ready for his doss at about half-past two. Ponting came later, and his lunch and his liqueurs took longer to consume. But he was always well ensconced by the time Wimpole came from the billiard-room.

Wimpole spoke of Ponting in no measured terms, but refused to put in a claim. Ponting was just the sort of man to have pointed out that no one member had more right to one particular chair than any other. The same reason prevented other members expostulating with him on Wimpole's behalf. Poor old Wimpole would endeavour to take his doss in another chair, but its refreshing qualities were destroyed, partly by irritation, partly because of broken habit. It really seemed, after all these years, as if he couldn't sleep at all in any chair but that one.

It was Harland who undertook to keep Ponting away from the chair at the time Wimpole was used to occupy it. He had a plan, which he imparted to certain of us, and we laughed over it and helped to elaborate it. Wimpole was as amused as anybody, but undertook not to laugh when the time came for him to play his part. Freeston, who had been one of the members to support Ponting's candidature, and had since expressed regret for it, was asked to join the cast, and did so.

Freeston was in the City. He had told us that if he had known one or two things about Ponting's financial manœuvres that he had lately learnt, he'd have seen him farther before he would have backed him. This was why he was invited to open the little comedy.

We watched him from a corner of the big room as he talked to Ponting one afternoon after lunch. Ponting was deep in the inviting laxities of Wimpole's chair, helping himself towards the required state of somnolence with a cigar and a plentiful supply of the club's best brandy. Freeston was in another easy-chair, which he had drawn up near it, with a table containing their refreshments between them.

They talked in low voices, and presently Ponting exhibited surprise, displeasure, and some confusion. Presently Freeston left him, and he composed himself hoggishly to sleep, but before he had quite sunk himself into oblivion he opened his eyes once or twice and looked suspiciously about him. Nobody, however, appeared to be taking any notice of him, and he soon had the room almost to himself, and slept soundly.

I have said that Ponting made himself very much at home with other members of the club. When he had slept off his lunch, he was always ready for a rubber of bridge or for conversation with whoever might be available for the purpose. He was not offensive through and through. It was possible to talk to him without always remembering that one would rather he had not been there.

When he awoke later on that afternoon, he sat up and looked about him. In the large room were a few scattered members, drinking tea and reading, but in the smaller room which opened out of it was a group of men in conversation, towards whom Ponting, hoisting himself out of his chair, made his way.

Three of us were sitting on a sofa with its back towards him, and, as he approached, Harland was saying: "Well, I never believed a word of it before, but now it has happened to Ponting too, it makes you think there's something in it."

A whispered word of warning caused him to look round and see Ponting just behind him, and he left off in well-feigned confusion.

"What's that about Ponting?"

The rubber king stood beaming down upon us. But it seemed that the whole group had just settled to go down to the card-room, and to his surprise he was left standing there, with only one to keep him company.

That one was myself, by arrangement. "I was just going to suggest a rubber," said Ponting, in a tone of grievance. "But before I go down, what were you all talking about just now?"

"We were talking about old Wimpole," I said, and rose from my chair as if to close the interview.

"No, you weren't; you were talking about me," said Ponting in his own inimitable manner. "Harland said something about something happening to Ponting."

"Well, if you must have it," I said, with a natural show of impatience at being contradicted, "we were saying that it was a curious thing that Wimpole had been telling everybody his secrets for the last forty years, and now you've begun to let out yours. Now I'm going. Good-bye."

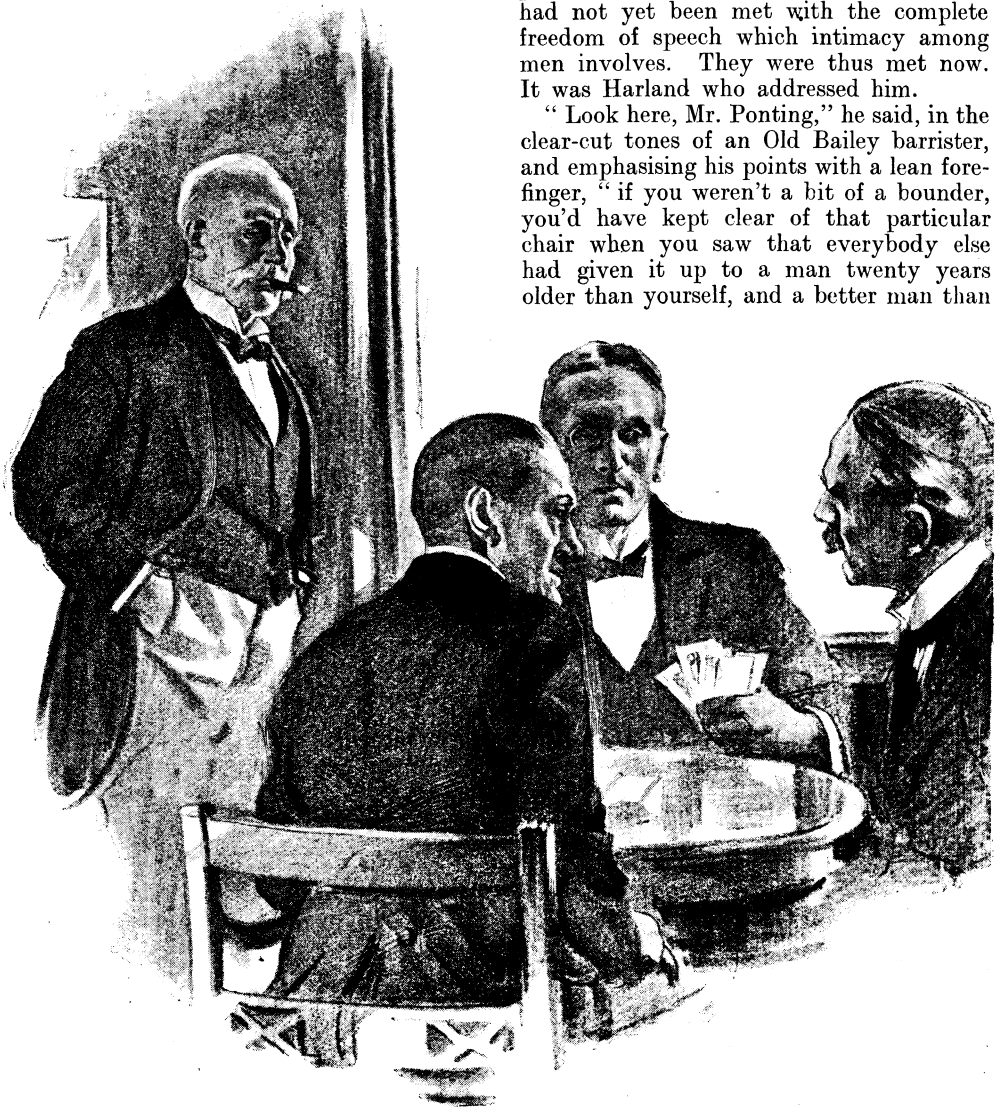
I suppose Ponting stayed upstairs for a few minutes to digest this, but he must have gone into the card-room almost immediately after I had left the club. I had tapped twice on the door as I passed it.

The rubber had not yet begun when he entered. He caught Desmond speaking this time. "I think somebody ought to tell Ponting for his own sake," he was saying.

"Oh, he wouldn't believe it," Harland managed to get in before Ponting's appearance set them once more busily to something thing else.

"You're in time to cut in, Ponting," said Harland.

"Thanks," said Ponting. "But, first of all, I want to know what all this tommy-rot mystery is about. What shouldn't I believe if I was told? I want to hear it."



"He strolled into the card-room half an hour before dinner-time."

He did hear it, after a proper show of reluctance, and when he had heard it, he laughed contemptuously. "You don't suppose you're going to take me in with that piffle," he said. "I know what you're up to perfectly well. You think you're going to scare me out of that chair that old Wimpole has appropriated. But you're not. He's no more right to it than I have. You can put up your funny ghost stories to somebody else."

I have said that Ponting had shown rather too much haste in claiming the privileges of intimacy, but his presumptions had not yet been met with the complete freedom of speech which intimacy among men involves. They were thus met now. It was Harland who addressed him.

"Look here, Mr. Ponting," he said, in the clear-cut tones of an Old Bailey barrister, and emphasising his points with a lean fore-finger, "if you weren't a bit of a bounder, you'd have kept clear of that particular chair when you saw that everybody else had given it up to a man twenty years older than yourself, and a better man than you'll ever be. You haven't been talked to about it because we weren't quite sure that you'd twigged that Wimpole wanted that particular chair; also—and please mark this—because Wimpole has a great many friends in this club, and they would very much rather he was kept out of the beastly

chair than not. *We* know that there's no harm in the old fellow, but we'd rather that new members didn't catch on to the mistakes of his youth, and perhaps spread them about to damage his reputation. As for what *you* let out when you're dreaming in that particular chair, you can take it from me that we don't care a hang. Perhaps it may be even useful to some of us, as you are generally supposed to have made money by your malpractices, and you may give us a hint or two if we listen for it. So now you've got it straight. We've given you your warning. If you don't care to take it, you can go your own way, and be hanged to you."

"That's pretty plain speaking," said Ponting, with a scowl.

"It's meant to be," said Harland. "Are you going to cut in or not?"

Ponting gulped down his annoyance and turned a card. But nobody was quite ready to play yet.

"Of course I don't believe it," said Williams. "It's too extravagant to be true. These things don't really happen."

"Well, it's been happening for years to Wimpole within our own knowledge," said Harland. "I don't know that anybody else has given it a chance until Ponting came. It seems to have begun to happen to him."

"Besides," said Desmond, "there was the story that came out in the papers. Mannering went into it, you know, when he first joined the club, and heard old Wimpole prattling in his sleep, and he certainly traced the chair. There's no doubt about it's having come from Conway House. Anybody can look up what happened there, if he chooses to take the trouble."

"How do you mean—look it up?" inquired Ponting. "What did happen at Conway House? And who is Mannering? I don't know him."

"Mannering is special correspondent of *The Courier*," said Harland. "He has been abroad somewhere since the beginning of the year, but I believe he's on his way back now. He comes here often, when he's in London, and you can ask him for yourself. Only I shouldn't advise you to hint to him that you don't believe what he says. He's the fellow who kicked Wagenheim down the stairs of his own office a few years ago. And I believe Wagenheim had quite as much money as you have, though he's lost some of it since."

"Ponting knows all about Wagenheim," put in Desmond. "He mentioned him in his sleep this afternoon."

It was a brilliant unrehearsed stroke. Ponting looked seriously startled for the first time. Previously he had only looked puzzled and annoyed.

"A fellow talks a lot of nonsense in his sleep, if he talks at all," he said. "But I didn't know I did. What did I say about Wagenheim? I hardly know him."

This was obviously a lie. "I didn't catch what you said," said Desmond. "I wasn't listening. I just heard Wagenheim's name. Come on, you fellows. I didn't come down here to talk all the afternoon."

We settled down to our bridge. Ponting did not play his usual confident, rather aggressive game. We had given him something to think about.

But he boldly ensconced himself in Wimpole's chair the next afternoon. He was not yet satisfied that we were not pulling his leg, and he was a determined sort of fellow.

He came down to the card-room when he had finished his nap, and we all looked at him askance, as if we were rather frightened of him. The action had been well rehearsed. We were in the middle of a hand, but that would not deter Ponting from saying anything that he had to say.

"Well, you fellows," he asked, in jovial fashion, "you were mostly upstairs when I was taking my little nap. Did I let out anything about my hideous past?"

There were quick glances, indicating disinclination to come to close terms with Ponting, and Williams said in an annoyed voice: "How on earth can I play a hand with you talking?"

Ponting sat down and watched the play. During its progress more glances were thrown at him, but with obvious reluctance to catch his eye in return. By the time the hand was finished he had lost his desire to learn what it was that he had let out. Without a word spoken we had indicated that it was something that had startled and shocked us. Ponting was plainly nervous, but we allowed him gradually to recover himself. We did not want him frightened away. There was more in it now than that Wimpole should regain his chair and keep it undisturbed. For Mannering was to appear that evening and take a hand in the performance.

He strolled into the card-room half an hour before dinner-time, when it was fairly full. But play was stopped at two tables

at least while he was given a warm greeting, as one who had removed himself too long from our ken. There were those who had dined in his company the night before, but Ponting was not one of them, and it could never have entered his head that this was not Mannering's first appearance among his associates, even if he had not said, in answer to a question, that he had "just landed."

Ponting happened to be sitting out that rubber. Things went well for us. Mannering's mild and courteous eye rested upon him, and gave Harland an opportunity of introducing him before play was resumed.

Those of us who were in a position to observe Ponting's reception of the introduction saw his resolution arise and fix itself as plainly as if he had spoken it. There had been no chance of collusion. He would get the story out of Mannering before there could be any. And if there was no story to get——

Yes, to those who were in the stalls, so to speak, it was the sweetest passage of the whole performance to see Ponting rise and suggest to Mannering a drink, to follow the delicacy of Mannering's slightly surprised but courteous reception of the invitation, and to watch their retreat together to a sofa in a corner of the room where they could talk unheard. It was like a twenty-foot putt finding its desired way to the very middle of the hole; it was like the far-travelled echo of a mountain horn; it was like all perfect response of Nature to Nature's law. The forces had been gauged and put in motion, and the result had immediately followed.

The conversation which took place on the sofa lost nothing as presently recounted to us by Mannering. Ponting began by showing a gratifying interest in his late experiences. He showed himself patronisingly aware of who Mannering was, and took care that Mannering should know who *he* was. As Mannering affected regretful but always polite ignorance upon the subject, he was forced to a plainer statement of his wealth, and the rewards it had gained him in the way of houses and servants and motor-cars and acquaintances among the aristocracy, than one gentleman usually makes to another. Mannering enjoyed this and encouraged it. When Ponting had created the right impression, so that Mannering would be pleased to pour confidences into the ear of a personage so well worth cultivating, and yet so agreeably ready to be cultivated, he mentioned various members of the club in varying terms of approbation, and finally came to Wimpole.

"That's not a bad old fellow," he said, "but there's something I don't quite understand about him."

He must have had something of the same experience of success as we had lately enjoyed when Mannering rose immediately to his bait and saved him further effort of inquiry.

"Ah, you've been listening to him talking in his sleep," he said. "We've all got used to that long ago. You'll keep it to yourself, of course. We're tender of the poor old fellow's weaknesses here, and don't want them to get about."

Ponting did not say that he had not heard Wimpole talking in his sleep. We meant that he should do so on his own initiative, and that we should be there to watch its effect upon him. "Somebody said something about the chair he goes to sleep in," he said. "It seems to me absolutely nonsense, but——"

Mannering hitched himself a little more confidentially close to Ponting. "Well, of course, nobody likes to admit themselves impressed by that sort of thing," he said. "Wimpole laughs at it himself, and so do a good many more. But it certainly is a very curious story. As a newspaper man, I collected information about it some few years ago, when it was written up here and there. I could have told a better story than anybody, because I knew more. But, you see, part of what I knew would have reflected on old Wimpole, and I didn't want that, so I dropped it."

"What *was* the story?" asked Ponting.

"Well, I don't know that I remember all the details now. I've got the cuttings from the newspapers somewhere."

"Oh, you've got actual printed facts," said Ponting. He seemed to think this important.

"Yes; I'll see if I can find some of them, if you like," said Mannering.

"I *should* like," said Ponting firmly.

"Very well. I'll bring some to-morrow. But I can tell you the outlines of the story now. There was a man called Milsom, who lived in an old house out Blackheath way. Conway House it was called. It was a large house in a large garden, and it had been left to him by a relation, with all its contents, which were valuable, and included a good cellar of wine, on condition that he lived there for a certain time every year. Some money went with it, too, and this fellow

Milsom accepted the conditions, though he wasn't the sort of spark that would much enjoy living so far away from the pleasures of the town as Blackheath. However, he made the best of it, and during his enforced residence he used to get lively people of his own kidney to come and make merry with him at Conway House.

"One of Milsom's earliest guests was a fellow called Mant, whom he'd met on a racecourse. Mant went to sleep in a chair after dinner, and blurted out in his sleep, in the most extraordinarily detailed way, the account of a racing swindle he had played upon another man who also happened to be Milsom's guest that evening. They taxed him with it when he woke up, and—— Well, for our purposes, there's an end of the first episode.

"The second followed soon after. Another guest of Milsom's, whose name I have forgotten, went to sleep in the same chair, and in his sleep told of certain happenings in his early married life. His wife was of the company, but she knew nothing of those early happenings, and—— Well, the second episode resulted in this gentleman being convicted of bigamy."

"Have you got all this down in print?" interrupted Ponting.

Mannering looked at him and said gently and rather hesitatingly: "I told you—didn't I?—that I should bring you the newspaper accounts to-morrow."

"Oh, yes," said Ponting hurriedly. "I didn't mean that I didn't believe you. But it's a most extraordinary story."

"It wouldn't be so very extraordinary so far," said Mannering. "But this happened five times, or possibly six—I can't quite remember—and, of course, all the revelations were not so startling. One of them, however, was from a man who had committed a burglary. Milsom had a sweet lot of friends; they seem to have blackmailed this one when they found that his swag had been heavy."

"That's three crimes out of six confessions," said Ponting, suspicion returning to him.

"It was four by the time it came to an end," said Mannering unflinchingly. "And the last was murder. Milsom himself was murdered. The suspected murderer was given much drink, and went to sleep in the fatal chair. He knew nothing about its peculiar qualities. He confessed and was eventually hanged. Excuse me; there's a table up. I shall have time for a rubber before dinner. I'll bring you those cuttings to-morrow."

"Haven't you rather overdone it?" we asked Mannering, when we had delightedly swallowed and digested his account of the conversation.

"Not at all," he said. "If a story is worth telling, it is worth telling well."

"And what about the cuttings?"

"I have the cuttings with me," said Mannering, "though it wouldn't have done to show them to Ponting at this stage. I am rather proud of the cuttings. I attended to them this morning. There is nothing much doing in the composing-room of *The Courier* before the afternoon, and I have friends among the compositors. I shall add one or two to-morrow, as my invention has slightly overstepped these in conversation with Ponting."

He showed us the cuttings. He must have taken a lot of trouble, and the compositors and printers must have taken a pride in helping him. There were about half a dozen of them, long and short, in different types and on different sorts of paper. No one could have told that they had all been printed that morning, unless by trying to smudge off the ink, which it would hardly occur to Ponting to do. There was printed matter on the other side of them, and on the edges which the scissors had not cut quite clean to the column.

Mannering's genius had impelled him to this perfection. It must have taken him all the morning to write up his stuff in different styles and see to its suitable production in print. He assured us, however, that it would all come in useful by and by. "There'll be a whole chapter to it in my Reminiscences," he said, "and Ponting himself will provide the latter part of the story. This is a rag that is worth carrying out."

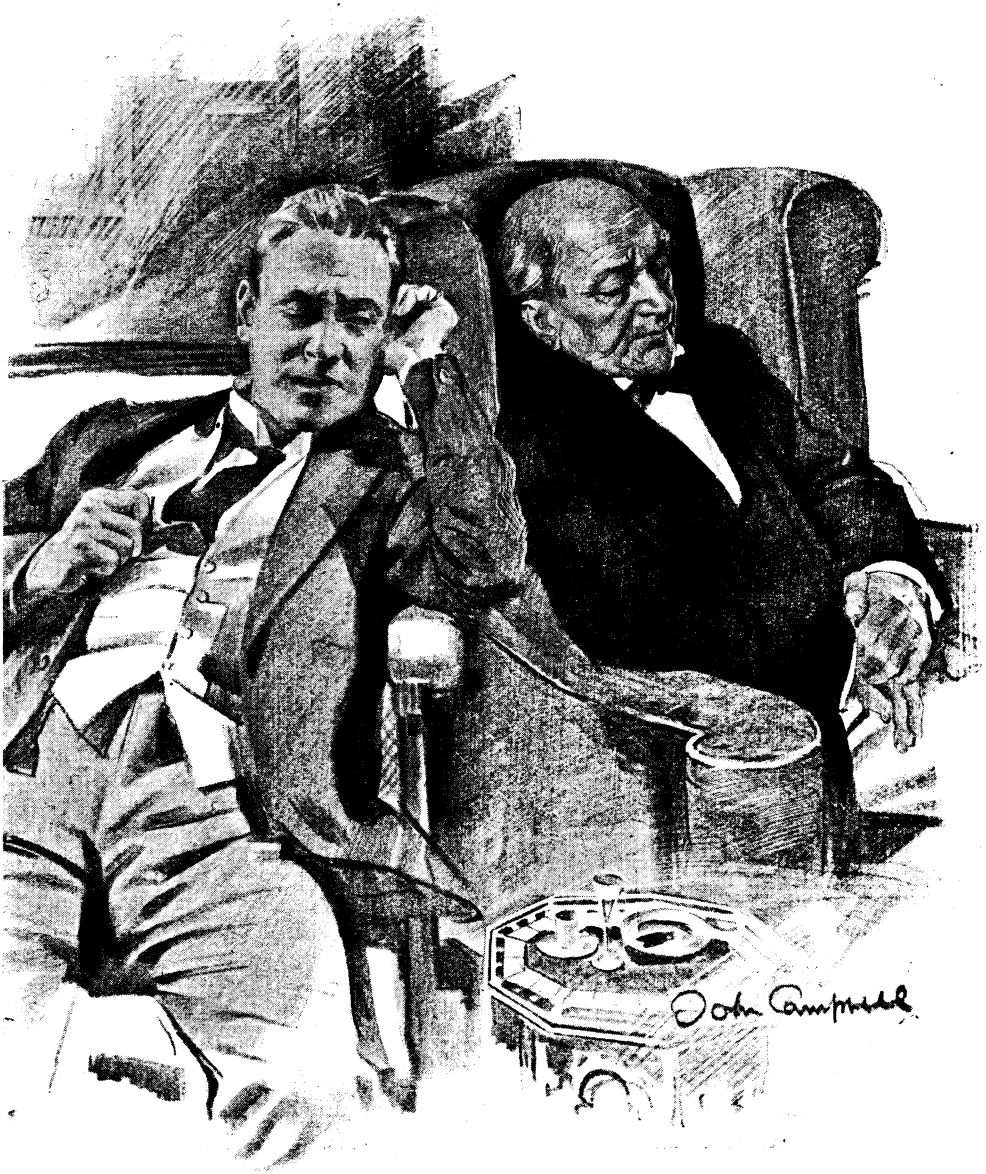
The only weak point was that there was nothing to show from what papers or of what dates the cuttings were. It is unusual for a newspaper man not to annotate his collected material. But Mannering said that if he had tried to fake these, Ponting could have upset the whole performance by reference to a single newspaper file. He was hardly likely to question the genuineness of such a collection. There was even one on pink paper and another on faint green.

Mannering had left the cuttings for Ponting in an envelope, and he read them after lunch over his coffee and cigar. We saw him doing so, and his face was a study.

He had been so far influenced, even before

this clinching evidence, that he had not put himself into Wimpole's chair, but into another one not far removed from it. By and by he settled himself, with heavings and adjustments of his large body, to his afternoon sleep. At this point, old Wimpole, informed that the moment had come, entered the room, and, with a wink of perfect understanding and enjoyment, took his chair and disposed himself to rest. Ponting half raised a sleepy lid and then closed it; but it was not difficult to see that his attention was aroused, and his closed eyes were only intended to disguise it.

Wimpole lost no time. He had not been ostensibly asleep for two minutes before he began to mutter. Ponting's eyelids twitched, but remained closed. Then Wimpole spoke, in a low but quite audible voice, with pauses between the sentences, and went on for about five minutes, after which he subsided, and I believe—though this he denies—actually



"The two men reclined within a few feet of each other, both of them pretending to be asleep, and Wimpole possibly being so."

went to sleep, habit being too strong for him.

Long before he had finished speaking, Ponting had ceased all real pretence of sleeping himself, though he still kept his eyes rather painfully closed.

It would be impossible to put down in cold print the details of moral depravity disclosed by Wimpole during those rich tense minutes before sleep overcame him. If he had been guilty of half the misdemeanours with which he unblushingly charged himself, he would have been totally unfit for the society of his fellow-creatures, and would have walked the earth with a load on his conscience that must have reflected itself on the clean pink of his white-fringed face. His invention could not have been beaten by Mannering, and the bland unconsciousness of his innocent old visage, as he lay back in his chair with his eyes peacefully shut, and poured out that stark confession of depravity, was a sight I would hardly have missed for any other that has come my way.

When it was all over, Ponting still affected oblivion. The two men reclined within a few feet of each other, both of them pretending to be asleep, and Wimpole possibly being so. We left them there, and presently Wimpole came down to the card-room to receive our congratulations, which were very freely offered him. Ponting had left the club.

He did not appear again for a few days. Then he came in to lunch, rather late, as usual, and after lunch went upstairs for his customary refreshment, but did not take it in Wimpole's chair.

The play had been played out, but its conclusion would lack something without a word from Ponting. Perhaps it was a trifle crude on my part to try to get it from him, while he was still in the imbibing pre-slumber stage, by saying: "By the by, Ponting, you won't mention anything of what old Wimpole let out the other afternoon, will you? You're one of us now, and we must keep it to ourselves."

He looked up at me out of a saurian eye and lied clumsily. "I didn't hear Wimpole say anything," he said.

So I had to leave it at that. Wimpole would occupy his chair undisturbed for the future, but that desirable end to our labours had somehow shrunk in importance.

We were talking in the smaller room when Ponting finished his sleep and joined us. Mannering was there. "Have you finished with those cuttings I lent you the other day?" he asked Ponting.

"I've got them here," said Ponting, and fished them out of his breast-pocket.

"Thanks!" said Mannering. "It's a funny story, isn't it?"

"It's a very funny story," said Ponting. "How did that chair come there?"

"Oh, it was bought at auction. We'd had it some years before I connected it in my mind with that story you've been reading. Then I found out from a steward who had left that it had really come from Conway House. He'd bought it himself at the sale. It's one of the most extraordinary facts of the story."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," said Ponting "The most extraordinary fact I've struck about it is that I should have missed it all in the papers last week."

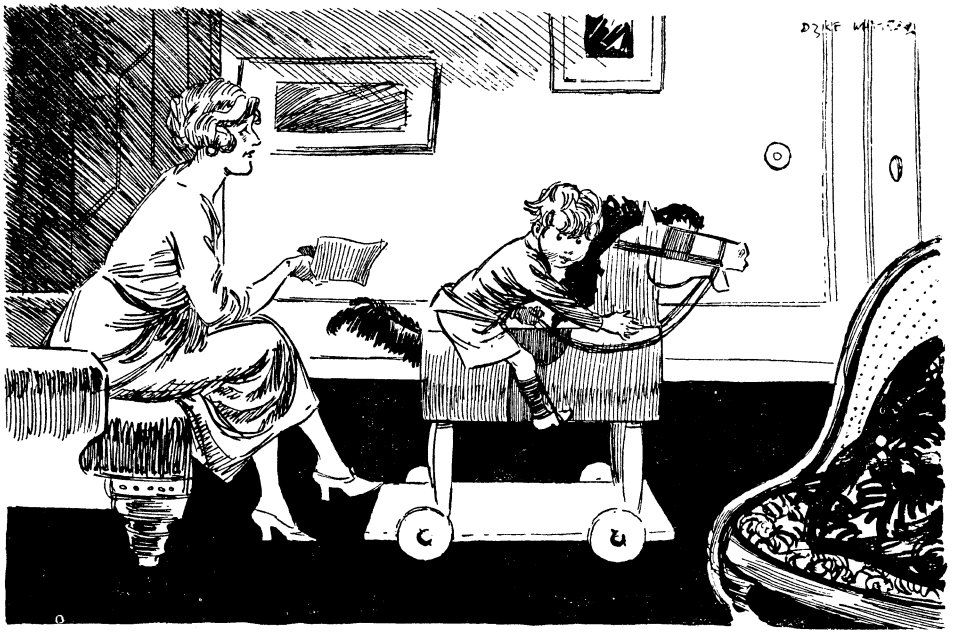
"Last week?" echoed Mannering.

"Yes. There were last Wednesday's Market Reports on the other side of one of those cuttings you lent me. I'd had an idea you said it had all happened years ago."

He looked at us with bland unconcern, and we looked back at him as he added: "I say, don't you think old Wimpole ought to be locked up?"

Then we all laughed, except Ponting, who continued to look bland and inquiring.

So it was Ponting who scored in the end. But he left Wimpole his chair after that, and turned out not such a bad fellow when we'd trained him a little further.



QUITE A FAMILY PARTY

MOTHER: Bobbie, your Aunt Edith has got a new little baby boy. I shall be his aunt, Daddie his uncle, and you will be his little cousin.

BOBBIE: My word, Mummie, hasn't he been quick in deciding who's to be which?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

A PIGMIES' WORLD.
By R. D. C. Graham.

I AM convinced that the tall man—I mean the really tall man, like myself, who can give three inches or so to a couple of yard-measures—is born under an unlucky star. Our undersized civilisation has no place for him. His life is beset with snares and pitfalls.

The dwarfs who set up sheds, outhouses, garages, conservatories, and so on, for their fellow-dwarfs, ignore the possibility that their puny structures may sometimes be entered by full-grown men (see above). Against the ludicrously low doorways such an one, if he relaxes his vigilance for an instant, will strike his head with cruel force. Any manikins present proffer hollow sympathies, while inwardly they deride his clumsiness. Now you know why tall men almost invariably stoop. It is another example of Nature's sovereign law of self-protection. If we walked upright, broken pates would very soon bring about the extinction of our worthy brotherhood. I may tell you that some of the splendid fellows are accustomed, in order to prepare themselves against the day's perils, to perform helpful exercises each morning before dressing. They walk briskly through cardboard doorways with lintels that can be placed as low as four feet from the ground.

My unhappy friend Percy, who excels me by three-quarters of an inch, and has a peculiarly sensitive skull, is numbered among these prudent ones. Yet once irreparable disaster overtook him. Poor fellow, he was engaged to Angela, a charming girl. In an evil hour she asked him to make an adjustment to her bicycle. As he was entering the cycle-shed, she called his attention to something or other. The bonds of wise habit were for a moment loosed; he raised his head quickly. . . . So acute were the pain and the shock that he could not refrain from brief but pungent comment. Angela, as I have the story, shrieked, put her fingers to her ears, and at once broke off the engagement. It is but fair to add that she was a bishop's niece, and, moreover, this deplorable incident took place before 1914. In similar circumstances the post-War maiden, as I assure Percy, would be less shocked than interested.

Shall I refer to our preposterous predicament as "out-sizes" in the matter of boots and shirts and hats and gloves? Need I speak of beds from which our toes protrude if we lie at full length, or boats which can only be

rowed if we have the seats somewhere under our knees? (Shouts of "No!")

The long man does not, as I believe, enter a tea-shop unless obliged to do so by *force majeure*. Personally I can never shake off the fear that, after patronising one, I may figure in police court proceedings. As I thread my way between the crowded tables, it is ten to one that, in spite of all my care, several inoffensive customers will receive shrewd buffets. Then I sit down very nervously and stretch out my legs a couple of inches or so. When my cramped attitude brings on "pins and needles," I push back the chair to give myself a little more room, and it comes in violent contact with somebody else's chair, or a pet dog, or another table laden with crockery. This depresses my *moral* out of sight, so that, when I am asked to pass the scones, I shall probably do something foolish with the hot-water jug.

But it is inside a motor-'bus, where there is "standing room only," that one feels most sorry for oneself. One's neck is bent over almost at right angles, and how wearisome a posture that is, nobody can understand who has not perforce adopted it from Trafalgar Square to Finsbury Park. I am always hoping that among my fellow-passengers there may be a man whose job it is to design motor-'buses, and that his heart will be touched by the spectacle of my supreme discomfort. Consider, too, the difficult point of conduct with which we are confronted. The most self-denying member of our fellowship may well hesitate before giving up his seat at the behest of chivalry. Ladies, the tall man who, in a 'bus, stands that you may sit, deserves a more gracious smile of thanks (if any) than that bestowed on the ordinary diminutive person. Please see to it.

We are seriously handicapped by our inches, too, in regard to what used to be called "push and go." Who are the people filled with the "get on or get out" spirit, who dash about carving out careers and becoming liable to colossal super-taxes? Not those, alas! who have large frames to manage, and are left with very little surplus energy. Far more congenial to their temperament has always been "the book of verses underneath the bough."

The tall man's sole privilege is that of looking with ease over the heads of the rest of humanity. Yet even this is a misfortune in disguise, for he is tempted to stand about in crowds, a thoroughly bad habit.

A pigmies' world! Some day, perhaps, we shall rebel. There will be formed a League



OVERHEARD AT OUR LOCAL MUSEUM.

VISITOR TO MUSEUM: I have been looking for a skull of Oliver Cromwell. Is there one here?
ATTENDANT: No, madam. We never had one.
VISITOR: How odd! I was in another town last week, where they have a fine one in their museum!



HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL.

CLUB BORE: I say, old man, have I told you the last thing my youngster said this morning? VICTIM: I sincerely hope so!



SECOND NATURE.

FARMER'S WIFE (on front seat on top of London 'bus): Put th' umbrella down, John, and look where be goin', or we'll be runnin' into summat!

of the Oppressed Lengthy, and we shall migrate to a far land and build us a fair and spacious city. Under the severest penalties, no doorway shall be less than seven feet high. We shall be able to visit places of entertainment with the happy certainty that the seats will give us ample leg-space. As the rule, instead of the blessed exception, the baths in our bath-rooms will permit us to submerge ourselves all in one piece without having the water up to the taps. And we shall shut out everyone under six feet, all the restless, hustling people, and carry on undisturbed with our lotus-eating.

A NEW small-holder was negotiating with a horse-dealer. "I am," he said, "not so particular about speed, but I must have a gentle horse for my wife to ride. Will you guarantee this horse to be safe?"

"Certainly," said the dealer. "He's a regular lady's horse."

"You are sure he's not afraid of anything?" asked the would-be purchaser anxiously, and for the tenth time.

Whereupon the dealer assumed an air of reflection.

"Well, there is one thing that he has always appeared to be afraid of since I got him," he admitted conscientiously. "It seems as if he's scared to death for fear someone might say 'Whoa!' and he not hear it."

LOVE AND THE 'FLU.

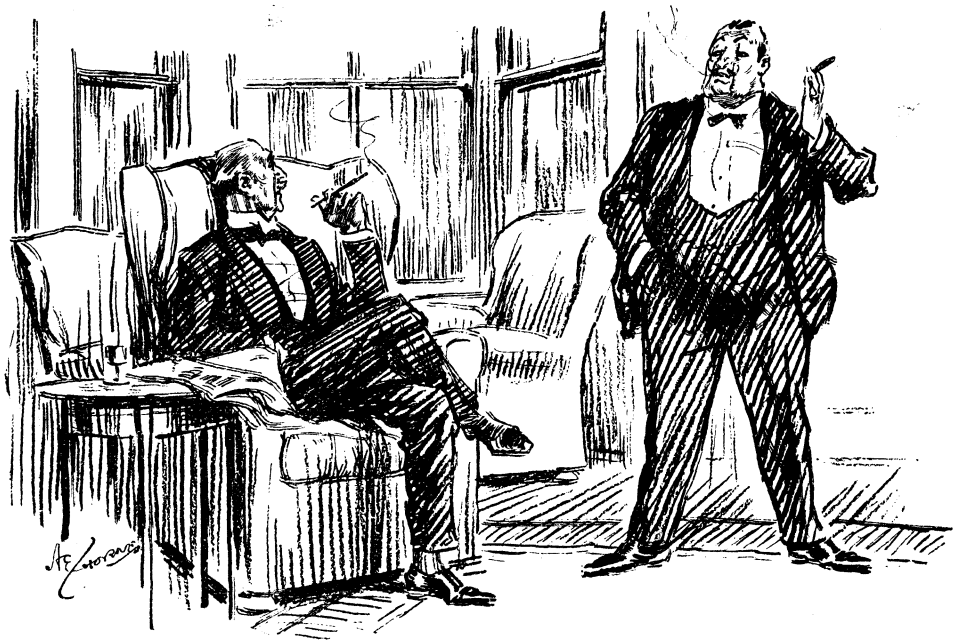
Wrapped in blankets, oh, my dearest, I am writing this to thee!
Though I failed to call last evening, think not bitterly of me!
I was seized with influenza in the middle of my tea:
It was best we shouldn't meet, dear — best for you and best for me.

Honeyed speeches are beyond me, for my voice is but a croak;
Feet that fain would fly to meet thee, now in mustard are in soak.
And your little curly head, dear, can't repose upon my vest,
For a hot and bulky plaster now adorns my manly chest.

Eyes once bright that gazed in thine, dear, now are sinking in my head,
And the nose you knew as Grecian, tinted is with fiery red.
Imps invisible are sticking red-hot needles in my skin;
Shivers seize upon my backbone, wheels are going round within.

I shall have to miss the play, dear, which we booked for in advance,
And you'll have to take your mother when you go to Jones's dance.
While the dry champagne is flowing, think about this poor old bean,
Quaffing quarts of toast and water mixed with tincture of quinine.

R. H. Roberts.



CLUB BOREDOM.

NEW MEMBER: Yes, sir, forty years ago to-day I came to this town a barefooted lad.
BORED VETERAN: How very interesting! And—er—how many pairs of shoes have you now?

THE ONE-FROCK GIRL.

By R. H. Roberts.

WHENEVER I select a nice book all about pirates and smugglers, or other works with no moral to speak of, to present to one of the rising generation, I always feel a great pity for myself, as I think of the stories my kind parents and guardians provided for me in the days of my youth.

Morals were scattered about their pages with reckless prodigality, and most of the cheerful people came to a bad end.

Although I always managed to counteract the evil effects of these tales with surreptitious doses of Dickens, I still remember one that had a gloomy fascination for me. Hear a tabloid version of it.

A stern parent was seated in his study one fourteenth of February, when his little daughter, aged nine, skipped in with a letter, exclaiming, "Here's a valentine for you, papa!" and skipped out again, after being reproved for her levity. The letter was from his bankers to inform him that he was ruined.

This has often struck me as being an exceptional act of courtesy on the part of the bank in question. I once had one and sixpence, the remains of a long-suffering "current account," in a bank that went wrong. They never had the decency to write to me about it; so far as I remember, they simply closed the front door.

But what annoyed this man was the fact that his giddy child had told him he'd got a valentine. Of course it was a bit rough on him, but how was she to know? Anyway, he persisted in regarding her henceforth as the author of his ruin, and always gazed on her with "a cold, fixed look," wouldn't kiss her good-night, and acted generally as an oppressive old idiot.

The ancestral home, together with a few packs of hounds and innumerable hunters, was sold up. The old butler did his best to avert the catastrophe by bringing the savings of a lifetime—a few paltry thousands—and laying them at his master's feet, and got sacked on the spot for his pains.

Let us now weep at the spectacle of the crushed and broken gentleman retiring to a hovel, containing some twenty-four rooms, situated in the slums of Kensington, with only three maid-servants and his two daughters.

There he lived on the remnants of his fortune—Heaven only knows what he was worth before the fatal smash—spending his time brooding over his infernal luck. It seems to me that even an agency for coals would have served to take his mind off his troubles a bit, but he preferred to wallow in gloomy retrospection. His eldest daughter, Angela, kept house for him. She was



TOO LATE.

OLD LADY: Why don't you make your little brother come out of that water and take him home? He'll catch cold.

SMALL BOY: He's got a cold already, lady.

a "sweet, loving, clinging creature" of nineteen summers, the image of her deceased mother.

I fail to remember any satisfactory mother in these tales—either they were chronic invalids suffering from a mysterious and wasting disease, or they died to slow hymn tunes about the third chapter.

Angela's chief duties consisted in cutting down the tradesmen's bills and keeping the author of the valentine joke out of the sight of her infuriated parent.

The feats of domestic economy performed by the sweet and clinging one were little short of marvellous. Her one frock, for instance, was first worn right side out, and then dyed, and afterwards turned and worn on the wrong side, and then dyed again.

Her father, under the impression that it was a new dress every time, reproached her for her reckless extravagance, whereupon she fled to her room and wept. But his ideas on the subject of economy were distinctly original. One day he noticed a dish of summer fruit on the table—probably half a pound of strawberries at fourpence—and, pointing to it, exclaimed with withering scorn: "Cannot we do without that?" After about fifteen chapters of similar harrowing details, the inevitable young man made his appearance. This is how it happened.

Angela was actually asked to a party by "the lady opposite." The invitation was received with inward flutterings, but she said: "I shall ask dear papa if I may go. If dear papa says 'Yes,' I will turn my frock once more and go. If dear papa says 'No,' I shall spend the evening at home weeping."

As it happened, she caught papa in a generous mood. "Never shall it be said," he exclaimed, "that I stood in the way of my children's innocent pleasures. It will cost nothing. Go, my child!" She went, wearing her dress with the summer side outwards, relieved at the neck and wrists by touches of old lace, once the property of her mamma.

Thus arrayed, she outshone everyone else at the party, although there were several expensive Paris gowns present. Enchanted youths flocked to her side, her heart and her programme were soon full. The owner of a noble brow and brown curly locks took her in to supper and saw her home. Might he call on her? Yes, if dear papa saw no objection. The youth, blissfully ignorant of papa's highly-strung nature, sought an interview with him.

I regret to say papa was extremely rude. Questioned as to his financial position, the young man admitted he was only in receipt of eight hundred pounds per annum, with the prospect of a pension from a grateful Government. On hearing this, the outraged parent turned up his eyes and requested the ceiling to inform him what he had done that a pauper from Somerset House should demand his daughter's hand of him. He then became white and speechless, and pointed to the door, subsequently cutting short a touching farewell on the hall mat.

After this episode Angela took all the flounces off her frock and had it dyed black, her average tearfall increasing at the rate of one inch per week.

She soon discovered with resigned satisfaction that the family wasting complaint had got a good hold upon her. Fortunately, before it had gone too far, her faithful swain, who must have been in the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, made a brilliant discovery. He found out that her papa was not ruined, after all, the mistake having arisen through the carelessness of a junior clerk in adding up the bank's balance-sheet.

His next interview was eminently satisfactory. The family estates were repurchased, including the identical hounds and hunters.



THE ALTERNATIVE.

"What time's the next train to Ditchfield?"
"Two-thirty."
"Oh, ain't there one before that?"
"Three or four, if you like to wait until to-morrow morning."

Father grew comparatively cheerful. He even condescended to kiss the valentine culprit on the brow, and went so far as to make one or two ghastly jokes, which were received with chastened hilarity by the family.

Angela married and lived in one wing of the ancestral castle, while the practical joker, now budding into womanhood, took the old gentleman in hand.

I should like to mention that, by special desire, Angela was married in the old frock, reconstructed for the last time as on the party night.



Her Pearls

caused a flutter of excitement amongst her friends and acquaintances.

THE wonderful necklet was the centre of attraction and admiration.

SHE rejoiced in arousing their curiosity—but finally imparted her secret. They were not real, as all believed—they were

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MAÑANA.

Rapidly a day approaches, one of labour and unrest.
Looming nearer, it arouses strange emotions in my breast.
All my new good resolutions on that day are to commence,
And my actions will be guided by the laws of common-sense.

Then I take to early rising, and forego my cigarette,
And instead of drinking whisky find that water's just as wet;
Pay the bills so long outstanding; do the deeds now left undone.
Rivalling the Village Blacksmith, I shall owe not anyone.

When I sacrifice my vices in this mighty holocaust,
Shall I get much consolation for the pleasures I have lost?
On attaining that perfection which is now to be my goal,
Shall I like the titillation of my shining aureole?
Yet I face the future bravely while I twiddle both my thumbs;
For that day is called "to-morrow," and to-morrow never comes.

Shum-Shum.



A MISLEADING APPEARANCE.

SMALL BOY (to man who is trying to weigh himself on a broken machine which only shows up to eight stone): Why, sir, you must be 'ollow!

WHENEVER Professor Trotter was invited to speak in public, his wife suffered anxiously. If she succeeded in starting him for the platform properly clothed and with his notes in his hands, some of her cares vanished, but not all of them.

One evening her husband was one of seven distinguished professional men who were to speak before a scientific society consisting of men from all parts of the country.

His speech was clear, free from the absent-minded murmurs which sometimes interspersed his discourse, and as he seated himself there were bursts of applause.... But suddenly his wife's cheek crimsoned.

"Did you see anything amusing about the close of my address, my dear?" asked the Professor, as they started for home. "It seemed as if I heard sounds suggestive of merriment about me."

"I don't wonder," said Mrs. Trotter, who up to that time had maintained the silence of despair, "for of all the people who applauded your address, you, with your head in the air and your chair tilted sidewise, clapped the loudest and longest!"

THE constable of a certain idyllic little village, a man of exceeding good nature, found it necessary to lock up three tramps who had strayed into his jurisdiction. Shortly after the arrest he was met by the mayor of the village, who, observing the constable hurrying down the main street, asked:

"Where are you going, constable?"

"Oh," explained the constable, "the three tramps I just locked up want to play bridge, and I'm out hunting for a fourth!"

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THE START.

By J. E. Wheelwright.

THE Tube was full to bursting. Every strap held its full complement of paws. I clung to someone who was clinging to a strap. That someone turned on me a surprised face. Behold, it was a friend of mine, a Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman.

"Do you know anyone who has a house to let?" I asked him quickly, to get it in first. I really want a house terribly, because in one calendar week from now Pauline, the little Paulette, and I will be homeless.

"Well—er—a—um—there's a man in my parish—— Dear me! Here is my station." He cast off from the strap and made convulsive movements towards the exit. I was left without visible means of support, and also in a state of palpitating excitement as regards his interrupted sentence. Clutching a perfect stranger round the neck, I sent a hoarse whisper after him: "Come in this evening—chess!"

Wilkinson would go anywhere for a game of chess. He turned his head, made a pathetic effort to nod, but caught his chin on a hat-pin, and the infuriated conductor pushed him off the car bleeding.

* * * * *

It was evening at our cottage, inaptly christened by a predecessor "Mon Repos." It is our repose for only six more days.

A ring. Wilkinson was announced, beaming. Pauline mixed him a stiff cup of cocoa, "To brighten chess," she murmured, as she handed it to him. When it had gurgled down behind his Adam's apple, I ventured again—

"Did you say you know someone who has a furnished house to let?"

"A—er—h'm—oh——" Wilkinson is not very eloquent without his notes, but finally he admitted there was a man in his parish who had a house—five bed, two sitting, bath h. and c. This man was leaving for America—called away by cable—and he regretted he had no time to find a tenant, though he would be away six months or more.

I could hardly breathe. Pauline was pale. I got out my note-book, trying to conceal emotion.

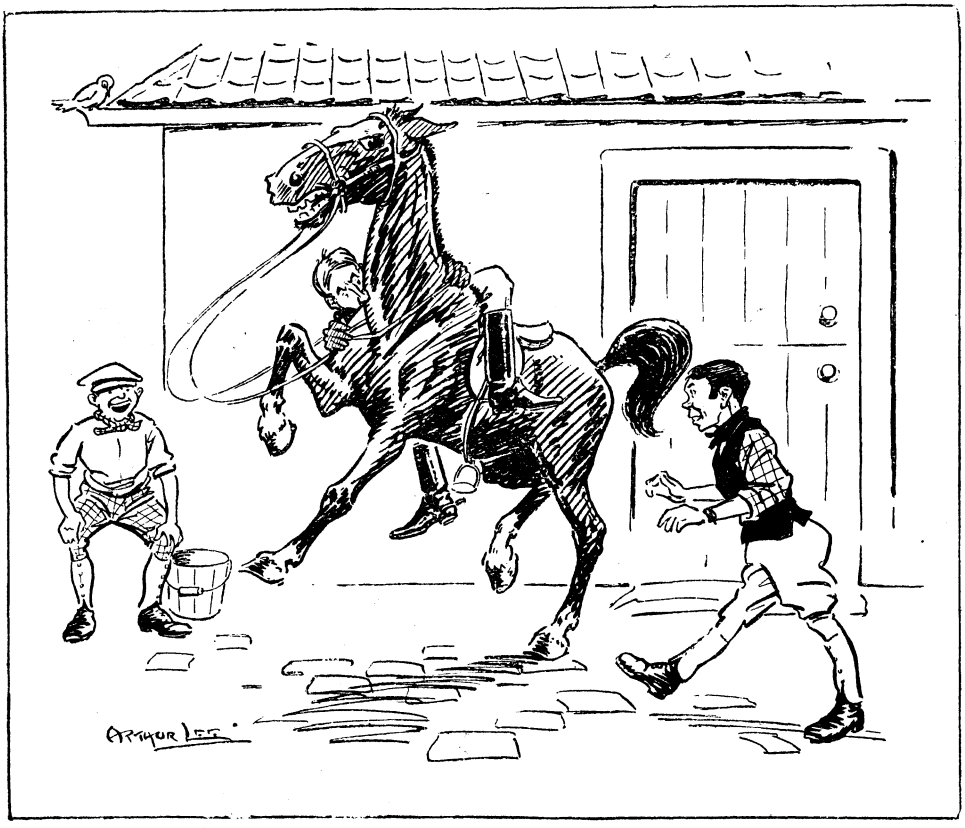
"Name?" I said quietly, licking the pencil with trembling tongue.

"Hooper is the name," he replied doubtfully.

Laying a hand on his arm, I said in a broken voice—

"Old friend—dear old friend—tell me all. Who is Hooper? Where is he?"

"He left yesterday," said Wilkinson, masticating a piece of cake.



JUST AS WELL TO KNOW.

SPORTSMAN (more used to motors): Here, I say, which rein works the brake?

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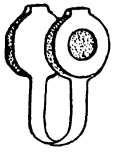


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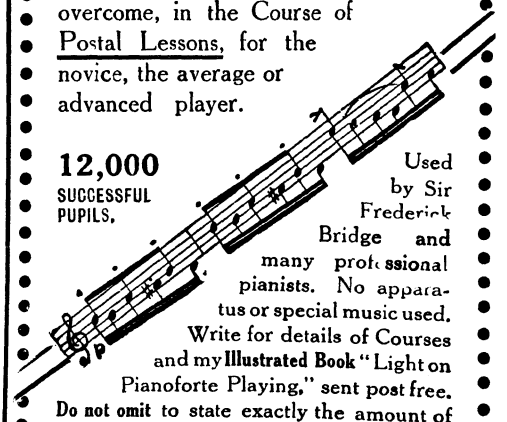
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NO SYMPATHY.

ROVING SCOT: A ha'e run about the braes, sir, an' pu'd the gowans fine!
PHLEGMATIC ENGLISH MAGISTRATE: Oh, have you? Thirty days for poaching.

The note-book dropped from my nerveless grasp. Tears, great tears, the slow disappointed tears of the house-hunter, rolled down my cheek.

I moaned. Pauline moaned a semi-tone higher.

"I have—er—one or two—er—letters from him here—a little matter of a forgotten subscription about which I had to jog his memory." Wilkinson was reading carefully. "Ah, he has not sailed yet. I see—er—er—to-morrow he will be at Bilgehampton till about six p.m. He gives an address there—sails next day. Dear me, I must post him a receipt."

I am one of those strong, silent men—a man of action, but few words. Pointing to the chessmen, I said: "I must leave you for a while. You and Pauline have a game—I have work to do."

So saying, I left them and shut myself up in the pantry with the telephone, a Bradshaw, an A B C, local train books, several sheets of ruled paper, and a sharp pencil. After an hour I emerged, haggard and ruffled, but ever strong and silent. Entering the drawing-room dramatically, where chess was still being freely indulged in by Pauline and Wilkinson, I read from my notes—

"To-morrow I am going to get up at five,

Turnwright's Toffee De-light

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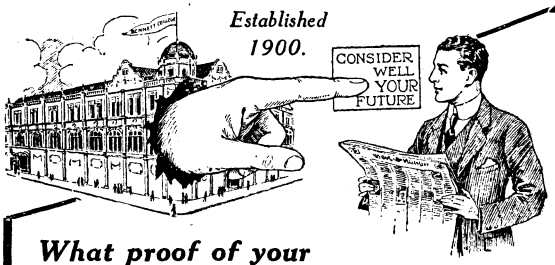


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The Bennett College

DEPARTMENT 25. SHEFFIELD

be dressed by five-thirty, have breakfast at five-forty, to leave the house at six-ten, to reach the station at six-thirty, to catch the six-thirty-five, which catches the express at Screechly at twelve-three, and gets to Bilgehampton at five p.m., to catch Hooper before he leaves, at six, to persuade him to give us the key of his house and an agreement to let it to us. I may put up there for the night."

"What?" said Pauline blankly.

"I am not going to say all this again," I replied; "it is final."

I draw a veil over the intervening hours. They were not restful. Persons in fiction can take a hat and start for Paris or Pekin at any moment. Not so I. There was a search for money. Happily, the cook had pounds and pounds. But I only possess fourteen collars—seven were at the wash—till to-morrow. Seven were unclean. My respectable boots were being mended, my least ancient overcoat was being dyed. I was to interview a gardener to-morrow. Aunt Jenkins was coming to lunch to see me to-morrow. No one would get up in the morning—the servants would leave. "Don't" was the verdict.

"Leave it all to me," I said, calm and strong as ever. "I will sleep in the spare room, prepare my own food on the electric cooker. One can wake oneself at any given moment."

"All right, Napoleon," said Pauline, "have it your own way."

And so to bed.

"I must—I *will* wake at five to-morrow," I said, banging my head on the wall five times. On the table I laid the letter of introduction given me by Wilkinson, and the card and address of Hooper at Bilgehampton.

"Five o'clock," I said, as I switched off the light.

And did not sleep.

At three a.m. I ceased to hear the hoot of the cuckoo clock, and slept.

Suddenly I woke, turned on the light. Horror! Six o'clock!

With a leap I was up. Half washed, half dressed, unshaved, I threw on a huge motor-coat to cover deficiencies. In its pocket I stuffed introduction letter, money—everything I could see. Into a Gladstone bag went all sorts of other things—a wet sponge, silver manicure set, twelve white ties. On the extreme surface a pair of new yellow boots. Why these things? Alas, I know not, but the bag must be filled, and one is not clear-headed in the hopeless dawn.

By half-past six, mad with agitation, I had half cooked and half eaten an egg, and drunk half a mouthful of half-warmed coffee, and was thrashing up the hill on the way to the station with a pounding heart. Heavens—or the other place—how hot and heavy was that leather-lined motor-coat! But, with a sprint almost beyond the limits of human endurance, I scrambled into the moving train, doing deep-breathing exercises with purple face.



THE WAY OUT.

PUPIL: Can a person be punished for something he hasn't done?
TEACHER: Of course not.
PUPIL: Well, I haven't done my arithmetic.

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Cured at age of 70.

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with its intolerable burning and itching, is caused by *acid-ladened* and impoverished blood. This acid works through the skin pores, bites into tender tissue, causing skin outbreaks, eruptions, boils, etc.

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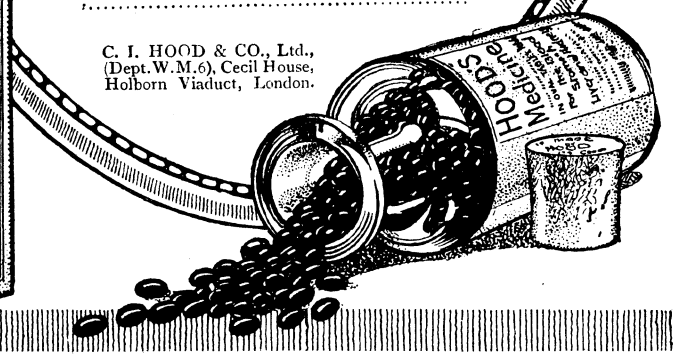
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At the junction, a prey to indigestion, I squeezed into an already full carriage, and dozed horridly in the heavy coat, shivering in the reaction.

My destination at last—a huge noisy crowd—no taxi, of course—and the train late. I should miss Hooper. "Is there a taxi?"

"No, guv'nor. If you walk up the town, you'll maybe get one."

Hot and groaning, I rush up the busy street. The coat is like lead, the bag is a curse. Why did I come? A taxi at last! Hi! He stops. Into it I fling the bag, and hand the driver the card bearing Hooper's address, without even looking at it. He groans as if in pain. "Five miles," he says, horrified and annoyed, but begins to start his engine again.

I sink on the seat and pull off the leaden coat—fling it aside exhausted. Hullo! That bag is open! A boot is missing. I look out. The yellow boot is in the middle of the road. I jump out, bang the taxi door. Curse! A small boy has seized the boot. He is off. A car comes between us. With a shout, I give chase down a side-street.

Catch him—shake the boot off him—rush back to the taxi. It has gone! He must have heard the door bang, and thought I was inside. He has my coat, with return ticket and money in it—and my hat. I have no notion what the address is. I have never been in this town before, and Hooper is leaving at six to-night—that is, in half an hour! And he sails for America to-morrow! That does for our chance of a house. Oh, hang—oh, h—— What's that infernal bumping? "George, dear, are you getting up? It's five o'clock. I've made you some tea and boiled an egg. Get up and open the door, will you? I can't, with this tray. You *are* going to get up, I suppose?"

"Going to get up? Oh, yes—oh, dear, yes, I'm getting up—thankful to get up and have a rest!"

Can I, I wonder, go through all that awful journey again? I can and will. But I won't wear the motor-coat this time. Great Scot! I must make a note of the address, and put it in my inside pocket. And I won't take my new brown boots.

You will be glad to hear that I had ample time to catch the train, first having a good breakfast. I found Hooper easily—a pleasant man—who made time to give me an excellent dinner, and also an agreement to let me his house for six months, with option of remaining, and a tip for the Grand National, which I hope will be the turning-point of my career. Selah.



MODESTY.

"And I says to 'er, I ain't one of them 'igh-placed aristocrats, and I admits it freely, let others say what they will."

"Mother, won't you please speak to baby?" called out a small boy who was supposed to be in charge of his youngest sister. "She's sitting on the fly-paper, an' there's a lot o' flies waitin' to get on."

Miss Gladys Cooper Explains Some Beauty Secrets.

The Popular London Star Favours Simple Methods.

I HAVE been asked to give a few simple recipes that I know, either through personal use or by observation, to be valuable to the toilet, and which are within the reach of the average woman. In these days of £100 facial treatments and elaborate and expensive beautifying processes my suggestions may read like lessons in economy, but they are not especially so intended. They are merely practical suggestions, in which the keynote is "effectiveness." All the materials or ingredients which I mention are either already at hand in the home or may be readily procured from the chemist. Fortunately I do not suffer from the ailments or troubles enumerated below, but some people who are not so fortunate have told me their experiences, and with your permission I will set forth some remedies which they have found to be efficacious.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

My acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is a very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ¼ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

Complexion Renewals.

Complexion experts advise me that a normal, healthy complexion is constantly renewing itself by dropping off in tiny flakes of worn-out tissue, thus revealing the fresh young skin underneath. They say that when this process is checked by age, exposure or some of many causes, the complexion becomes dull and ugly. The rational treatment recommended is to help the skin perform its natural functions of "shedding" worn-out tissue. For this purpose, I am informed, there is nothing so good as pure mercolized wax, used for a few nights, just as you would use a face cream. It is claimed that it possesses a special affinity for the effete scarf-skin, which it quickly removes by absorbing it. The face, I am assured, will soon look much younger and prettier under this treatment.



MISS GLADYS COOPER.

Photo] [Wrather & Bay.

Removing Superfluous Hair.

I have been told of some most remarkable experiments in removing superfluous hair, roots and all, with what is said to be a perfectly harmless substance known as phelactine. It is claimed for this preparation that it is not a depilatory and therefore does not burn or injure the skin. With a candle flame it is first melted to a syrup-like consistency, and while still warm is smeared on the skin over the superfluous hair. Although it is removed almost immediately, the effect is supposed to paralyse and loosen the hair roots, for when it is removed the hair should come right off with it and the roots themselves. I am told that in many cases the growth never reappears, and that even if it does so it returns only after a very long time and in so much weaker form that it is easy to cope with by means of a repeated application of phelactine. I understand that the method is becoming so well known that many chemists are now supplying phelactine in specially prepared packages containing full instructions for home use.

Is Powder Necessary?

A great many women object to using powder, for various reasons. The following formula is a good one: Dissolve an ounce of cleminite in four tablespoonfuls of water, or witch-hazel, and use it as a face lotion, smoothing the skin with the fingers until it is dry. This method is perfectly harmless. I am told that a really beautiful, natural, velvety bloom results and remains for many hours quite unaffected by the most trying conditions out of doors or in the ballroom or theatre, and that it gives a much more natural appearance to some skins than does ordinary powder.

Grey Hair.

I have observed many attempts of many people to conceal grey hair. Some of these experiments were amusing, some disastrous, and some were successful. Personally, I believe I shall let my hair turn when the appointed time comes, but if I were going to try to evade it, I would give a trial to a real old "grandmother" formula that would probably do the work. This formula, I am informed, has been used with degrees of success for many generations, and consists merely of two ounces of concentrate of tammalite mixed with three ounces of bay rum. It is applied to the grey hair a few times with a small sponge, and ladies tell me it appears to darken the hair to a natural shade, not like a dye, but gradually and naturally.

The Curling Iron.

Don't use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night. When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair, and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant, and neither sticky nor greasy.

How to Shampoo.

Most women, I am informed, do not know how to use stallax properly when shampooing with it. Unless the hair is naturally very oily, a stallax shampoo may sometimes leave it rather dry. But I am told if you will apply olive oil freely to your hair and scalp just before shampooing with stallax, the result is most delightful. The hair will be left clean, soft, bright and wavy, the olive oil having properly balanced the action of this wonderful hair cleanser.

Care of the Hands.

An excellent method of putting the hands in fine condition, and keeping them so, is to rub them with bicrolium jelly just before retiring at night. This quickly takes away roughness, redness, tan, etc., and makes them soft, white and smooth. After this has been done, an occasional application will keep them in proper form.

Gladys Cooper

NOTE.—This interesting article on beauty culture in general was written by Miss Gladys Cooper at the request of the manufacturers of Pilenta Soap—the best complexion soap in the world. On sale at all chemists.

A LENTEN LAY.

This little poem is about
A maiden charming but devout,
Who to her ardent lover said—
Shaking reprovingly her head—
To but one kiss she would consent,
For it was Lent.

Upon her lips he placed a kiss,
Then to her words he answered this:
"A loan must be repaid, 'tis plain,
So give me back my kiss again;
As a free gift it was not meant—
For it was lent."

B. Noël Saxelby.

"WHAT," asked Miss Jones of one of her pupils, "do we mean by the word plural?"

Betty, knowing the teacher's custom of following a definite order in putting her questions to the class, had been expecting this particular one for some time, and was rather proud of the answer she had ready. She promptly responded:

"By the plural of a word we mean the same thing, only more of it."

MOTHER was much interested in the new friends that her small son had made during the first days of the school term, and she questioned him rather closely about them.

"Who is this Walter Marston?" she asked. "Is he a good little boy?"

"Rather!" was the small boy's emphatic response.

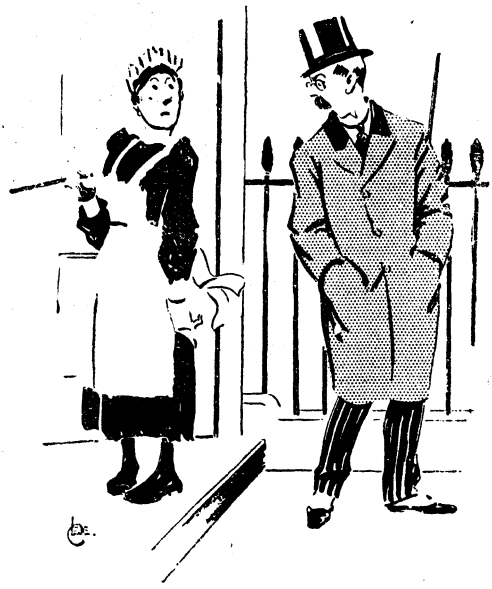
"Does he ever use naughty words?" continued the mother.

"No, mother," said the well-trained son, with equal emphasis, "and I am not going to teach him any!"

A COUNTRYMAN from a remote rural district recently made his first visit to London. Shortly after his arrival he went into a restaurant and ordered what seemed to him rather a meagre meal. When the bill was presented, it was unexpectedly large. The countryman looked at the amount twice to make sure his eyes were not deceiving him. Then he smiled. "Waiter," he called, "you've made a mistake. I've got more money than that!"

JENKINS, who had taken his children to a country place for the holidays, was walking across a meadow with Tommy, the youngest, when the latter saw a cow for the first time.

"What is that?" asked the child.



NO TIME LOST.

CALLER: You'll tell Mrs. Brown I called, and was sorry to miss her, won't you?
MAID: I 'ave told her already, sir.

"That's a cow, my son."

"And what are those things on her head?"

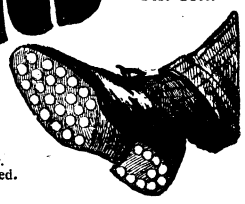
"Horns."

And the two then moved on. Presently the cow mooed, whereat Tommy was surprised.

"Which horn did she blow, father?" he asked.

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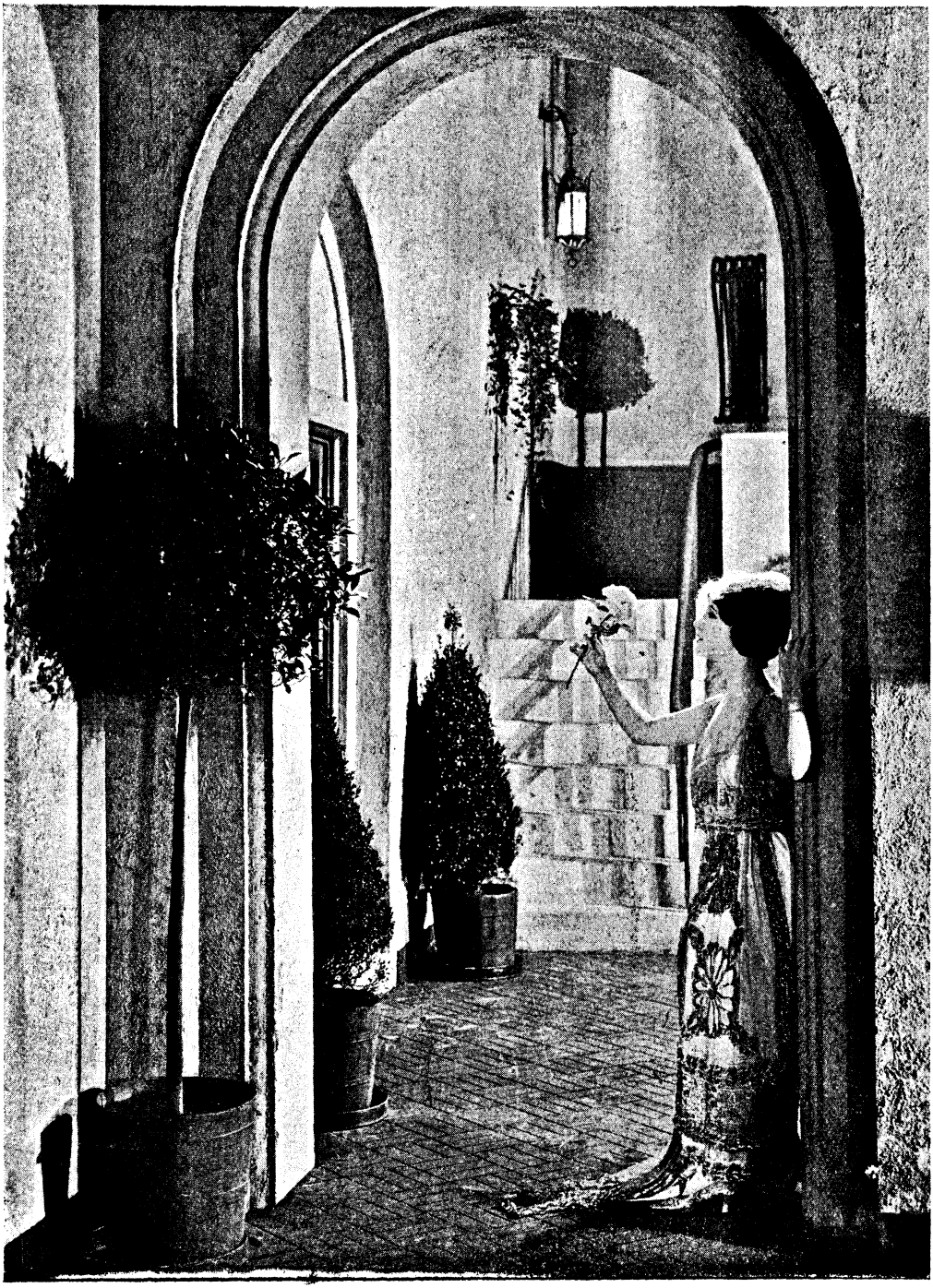
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A CLEVER LIGHTING EFFECT IN "COUNTERFEIT," A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE, WITH ELSIE FERGUSON IN THE PRINCIPAL RÔLE.

See article "Lighting Effects in Cinema Production," on p. 489 of this number.



"Monseigneur Forest read the note twice. The face which he raised from the paper wore a look of amused impatience."

LIVERY OF SEISIN

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

WITH Monseigneur Forest, other than in his capacity of uncle and counsellor to Miss Valerie French, we are not concerned. It is necessary, however, to record that the dignitary was no fool. He was, in fact, a very wise man, able to understand most men and women better than they understood themselves. With such understanding, naturally enough, went a rare kindness of heart; the addition to these things of a fine sense of humour argued a certain favouritism on the part of a Providence which bestows upon ninety-and-nine mortals but one virtue apiece, and to the hundredth but two. Monseigneur Forest was, I suppose, a man in a million.

A letter of some importance, which his niece had sent him, reached him in Rome ere October was old.

Dear Uncle John,

I want to see and talk to you very badly, but I can't leave England just now. I suppose

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you guess what is coming. I can see you smile. You're quite right. I've fallen in love.

Listen. I was out with poor little Joe in the country, and went to an inn for tea. And there was a man in the garden. I didn't know he was there till his dog and Joe started scrapping, and then he ran up to separate them. The moment I saw him—I don't know how to tell you. I just felt floored . . . Then—instinctively, I suppose, for I hardly knew what I was doing—I tried to cover up this feeling. I was furious with him for knocking me out. Can you ever understand? And I was pretty rude. He took it wonderfully and just apologised—Heaven knows what for—and cleared out. The moment he was gone, I could have torn my hair. I actually went again to the inn, to try and find him, though what I should have done, if I had, I don't know. . . .

Then I saw him again—not to speak to—as I was coming away from the Opera. Now hold on to something—tight! He was in livery—a footman's livery.

Yes. It made me jump, mentally, for the moment. Of course I'd never dreamed of that. And then I realised that he must be down on his luck, and I felt so sorry for him I could have cried. As a matter of fact, I did cry. And then, all of a sudden, I knew that I loved him.

We met properly a week or two later by accident—on his part. You must forgive me. If you knew him, you would. And now we know one another properly, and he's in service quite close to Bell Hammer, with George and Betty Alison—didn't you meet them at Christmas? Lost all their money, and went out as chauffeur and parlour-maid. Anne, George's sister, is there, too. And he came to dinner the other night, and Aunt Harriet likes him, and we're—well, great friends.

And I don't know what to do. You see, he's terribly proud and honourable, and, to him, being a footman matters very much indeed. Of course it doesn't really matter in the least, but he would never look at it that way. And all my money, instead of making everything possible, as it might, only makes things worse.

What is to be done?

I can't blame him. Indeed, I'd hate him to feel any other way, and yet . . If only the positions were reversed! Then it would be too easy. As things are, it's a deadlock. And I love him so, Uncle John. I suppose you couldn't possibly come. I have a feeling that you would straighten things out.

Your loving niece,

VALERIE.

P.S.—I'm so terribly afraid he'll disappear or something. He's like that.

Monseigneur Forest read the letter with a grave smile. Then he read it again very carefully, looking to see if there was anything unwritten between the lines. Only once did he raise his eyes from the note-paper. This he did meditatively. Before returning to the letter, he went further and raised his eyebrows. . . .

The cause of this elevation is worthy of note. It was, in fact, none other than the reference to Anne—and yet not so much the reference itself as the manner in which this was made. The prelate, you will remember, was no fool.

For that matter, he was not a god, either. Consequently, the counsel which he presently offered his niece had to be communicated by the material channel of the "common or garden" post, and was, in fact, nearing Modane when Valérie rounded the edge of a belt of Scotch firs in Hampshire to come upon Anthony Lyveden regarding an old finger-post in some perplexity.

As my lady came up, Lyveden uncovered and pointed to a weather-beaten arm, upon which the words FRANCE 4 MILES were still discernible.

"Can you help me?" he said.

Valerie smiled.

"I think so. This is a very old post—over a hundred years old. You know Hawthorne?"

"I ought to."

"Well, once upon a time the village was called France. But during the Napoleonic wars the name was changed. For obvious reasons."

"And they forgot to alter this?" said Anthony, nodding at the cracked grey wood.

Valerie shook her head.

"No one would do the work. You know they used to bury suicides at the cross-roads? Well, one was buried here. That was when—when the post was set up . . ."

A little shiver accompanied her words.

"I see," said Anthony. "The body was staked, wasn't it? What a barbarous old world it was! I don't wonder they were afraid of the place."

"It's supposed to have been an old usurer who came from these parts and had ruined all sorts of people in his time."

"And why did he kill himself?" said Anthony.

"I forget. There was some mystery about it. I remember an old, old shepherd telling me some of the tale, when I was a little girl, and my nurse came up in the middle and scolded him and snatched me away."

"Quite right, too," said Anthony. "And if she was here now, History would probably repeat itself." With a sweep of his arm he indicated the countryside. "Was this your nursery?"

Valerie nodded.

"In the summer." She hesitated. "I'll show you my window, if you like. It's the best part of a mile, though."

Anthony laughed and turned to summon his terrier.

"Patch and I," he said, "have at least one afternoon a week. As long as I'm back in time to lay the table . . ."

A moment later he was stepping along by her side.

It had not occurred to him to ask what "her window" might be. If she had offered to show him the mouth of Hell, he would have assented as blindly. Whither he went and what he saw did not matter at all, so he was to be in her company. All the same, his instinct pulled him by the sleeve. Hazily he reflected that to retrace such steps as you have taken along the path of Love is a bad business, and that the farther you have elected to venture, so much the more distressing must be your return. And he would have to return. In the absence of a miracle, that journey could not be avoided. For an instant the spectre of Reckoning leaned out of the future . . . Then Patch flushed a stray pig, and Valerie laughed joyously, and—the shadow was gone. Cost what it might, Anthony determined to pluck the promise of the afternoon with an unsparing hand.

He had walked in the direction of Bell Hammer for the same reason that had caused Valerie French to bend her young steps towards Hawthorne. Each drew the other magnetically. It was not at all strange, therefore, that they should have met. Neither, since the attraction was mutual, is it surprising that the effect of each other's company was exhilarating to a degree. Together, they were at the very top of their bent. If the man trod upon air, the maid was glowing. His lady's breath sweetened the smell of autumn: the brush of her lord's jacket made the blood pelt through her veins. Grey eyes shone with the light that blue eyes kindled. Each found the other's voice full of rare melody—music to which their pulses danced in a fierce harmony. The world was all glorious . . .

Here was no making of love, but something finer—nothing less, indeed, than the jewel natural, uncut, unworked, unpolished, blazing out of a twofold crown that sat, yoke-like, upon their heads for all to see. Since, however, they met no one, the diadem was unobserved. . . .

So Jack and Jill passed with full hearts by yellow lanes into the red-gold woods, and presently along a bridle-path that curled mysteriously into a great sunlit shoulder of forest, where the driven leaves fussed over their footsteps, and the miniature roar of a toy waterfall strove to make itself heard above the swish and crackle of the carpet the trees had laid.

"I'll tell you one thing I've learned," said Lyveden.

"What?" said Valerie.

"That what you do doesn't matter half as much as who you do it with. I found that out in the Army. The work didn't matter. The discomfort, the food, didn't count—comparatively. It was the company you had to keep that made the difference."

"'Better is a dinner of herbs,'" quoted Valerie.

"Exactly. And it's the same now. I don't say I'd pick out a footman's job, but there's nothing the matter with the work. Everything depends on the other servants. My first two places nearly broke my heart: with the Alison crowd——"

He hesitated, and Valerie completed the sentence.

"Everything in the garden is lovely," she said slowly.

"Comparatively—yes. Of course, it's—it's only a back garden."

"Is it?"

Anthony nodded.

"Entered by the back door and approached by the back stairs. You can't get away from it."

"I can," said Valerie. "Speak for yourself. It's you who can't—won't get away from it. They say that in Russia there are noblemen sweeping the streets. If one of them was a friend of yours, would you turn him down because he carried a broom? Of course you wouldn't."

"No, but——"

"But what?"

"The first duty of a servant," said Anthony, "is to know his place."

Valerie stood still and looked at him.

"I wonder you don't call me 'miss,'" she said, shaking her head gravely.

"Very good, miss," said Lyveden.

"That's better," said Miss French contentedly, slipping an arm through his.

"And now, if we leave the path and bear to the right, in about two minutes we shall come to my window."

The two had been climbing steadily, but another fifty paces in the direction Miss French had indicated brought them to the foot of a steeper ascent than ever. This was, in fact, a broad natural bank, some thirty feet high. The careful negotiation of a tiny path, followed by a plunge into a thicket, where the stubborn protests of boughs had to be overruled, landed them in a dwarf clearing, which the density of the surrounding *bocage* rendered a fastness.

Valerie stepped to the far side and parted the branches.



"He touched his cap with a smile and left them."

"Look," she said.

They were upon the lip of a heather-edged bluff which fell sheer for perhaps two hundred feet into a pinewood. Beyond, by mammoth terraces, the glory of the forest sank step by colossal step into the purple distance, from which distant in turn a thread of silver argued the ocean. There never was such a staircase. The grandeur of its proportions diminished the rolling world. The splendour of its covering made colour pale.

Anthony gazed spellbound. At length—

"I didn't know there was such a view in all England," he said.

Miss French smiled. Then she moved cautiously forward, till she was clear of the bushes, there to sit down upon a billowing cushion of heather which grew conveniently about as close to the edge of the bluff as it was prudent to venture. Abstractedly Anthony followed her and, after a glance about him, took his seat by her side upon a patch of gravel.

"I'm in your debt," he said simply. "Deeper than I was before."

Valerie nodded at the wonder of landscape.

"I'll make you a present of this," she said. "What else do you owe me for?"

Anthony spread out his hands.

"Your society," he said.

"You've paid for that—with your own."

"Your pity, then."

"I've never pitied you," said Valerie.

"You've stooped," said Anthony.

"I've not stooped," was the fierce reply.

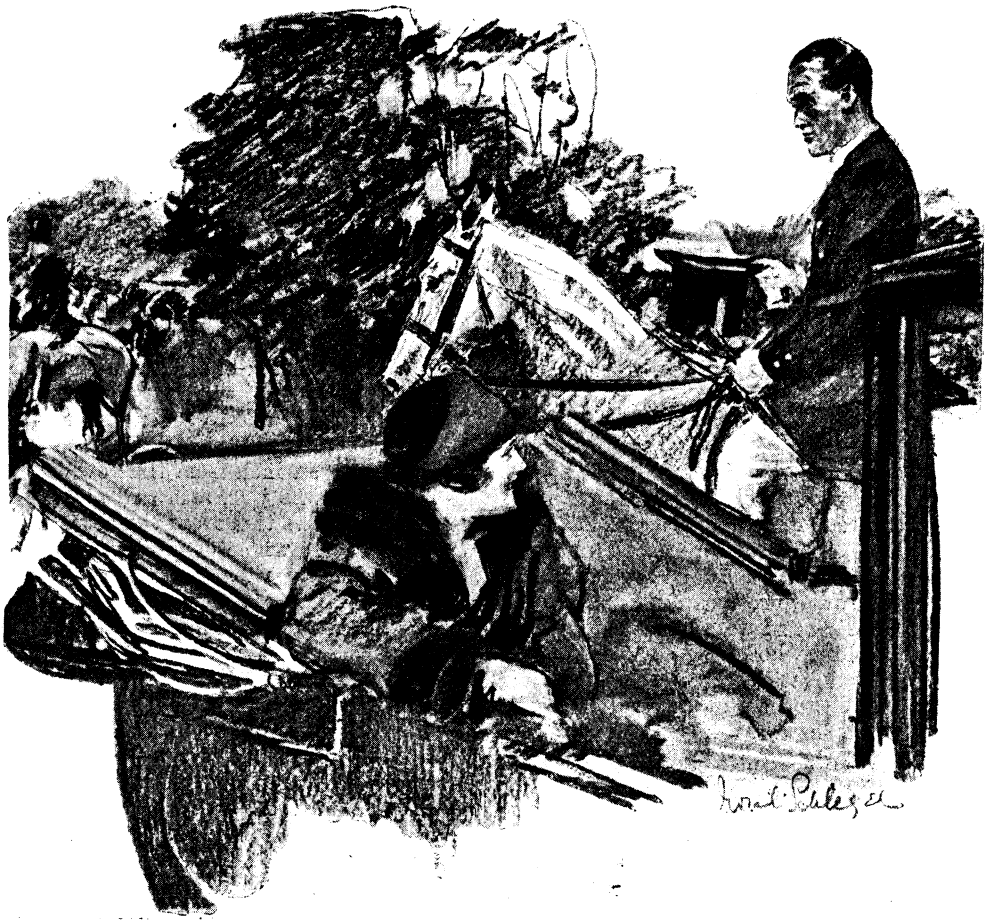
"We won't argue it," said Anthony. "I owe you for your—your interest, at any rate. You've been good enough to interest yourself in my——"

"Aren't — you — interested?'" said Valerie, staring into the distance and seeing nothing.

For a long minute the man sat motionless, not seeming to breathe. Then—

"Yes," he said slowly, "I am. And that's but you, you, you! And you ask if I'm interested!"

A wandering puff of salt air swooped out of the windless sky, ruffled his thick dark hair, and was gone, panting. A gull sailed close to them, circled, dipped and sped seaward with a smooth rush. The league-long shadow of a cloud swept stately over the gleaming woods, driving the sunlight before it, itself driven before the twin of its prey . . . The silver wire of silence became more and more tense. Each second



"Every gazed after him with his hat in his hand. Then he looked at Valerie with wide eyes. 'But—but he's a footman,' he said stupidly."

the devil of it." With a sudden jerk he was on one knee beside her and had caught her hand. "Oh, lady, don't you see? That's what kills everything. Am I interested? Good Heavens, I'm—I'm crazy! I can think of nothing else. You blot out everything in the world. Whatever I do, or say, or think, you're always there. There's nothing

gave another turn to the screw. Valerie began to tremble . . .

"And that," said Lyveden at last, "that's why we can't be friends. I can't be your friend because I love you: and I mustn't love you because——"

"Why?"

"Because it's out of the question," he

flashed. "Don't tempt me, Valerie. You know it is. I'm crying for something that's utterly, hopelessly, laughably out of my reach. I haven't the right to the moonlight, and I want—the moon."

He stopped suddenly and dropped his head, ashamed that he had let his passion ride him so recklessly, limp after his outburst, sick at heart for the truth of his words.

Valerie sat very still, exultation and anxiety fighting for a grip on her heart. Anthony had told his love, raved of her, called her by name. (Anxiety's claw-like fingers began to yield.) The very intensity of his utterance declared his conviction that he must give her up. The exceeding bitterness of his tone rang too true to be ill-founded. (Exultation's clutch weakened, and Anxiety took a fresh hold.) Of a sudden Valerie felt persuaded that Time could win her battle, could she but gain his aid. As if to establish this persuasion, the reflection that the old fellow had straightened more crookedness than any other minister of love came to her hotfoot, and then and there she made up her mind to court him. She yearned to put her arms about her man's neck, but felt that somehow that way lay ruin. Anthony being what he was, it was all-important that she should not show him her hand. He had seen—should see a card or two, certainly. That the rest were the same, card for card, as those he had just flung down, in his present mood he must on no account realise. Such knowledge were fatal. He would, presumably, kiss her, and then call Patch and walk out of her life for ever. So long, however, as he did not believe her lovesick, he would—well, he would not disappear, at any rate. There are who lay hold on hopelessness rather faster than they lay hold on life . . .

"Anthony, dear," said Valerie, "let's—please don't let go of my hand—let's look for a way out. You know, I think——"

What she would have said should not matter to us. We have peered into her brain-pan. The sentence, however, was never completed, and that for a reason which shall pass muster.

On perceiving that Valerie and he were moving, Anthony for a moment of time suspected an earthquake. Almost instantaneously he appreciated that, while it affected him pretty closely, it was a much smaller matter—nothing more, in fact, than the giving way of that portion of the cliff upon which the two were disposed. It was typical of the man that he neither swore nor cried out, and of the soldier that he thought and acted simultaneously . . . By the mercy of Heaven, he was, as you know, upon one knee. Had he been sitting, like his companion, they must have gone with the avalanche. As it was, they were able, after a painful silence, to hear this crash evilly with a dull roar into the pinewood.

The echoes rumbled curiously into the distance, and a startled medley of cries rose from all manner of birds, which soared out of their shelter, dismayed and whirling. One bird was fairly gibbering. Miss French and Lyveden both noticed it. Valerie found herself wondering whether it had lost its wits.

For the perfection to which their senses focussed these and other very ordinary things, their plight was responsible. It has been said that the faculty of observation is never so pronounced as when the observer is face to face with Death. Anthony and the lady were looking him in the eyes. The pair of them was, in fact, hanging in space, dangling two hundred feet up, with an inch and a half of ash-plant between them and Eternity.

With his right hand Lyveden was grasping the slender trunk of a sapling which grew three feet to an inch from the new edge of the bluff. As he was, arm and all, at full length, it follows that from the breast-bone downwards the whole of him was over the cliff. Valerie was altogether in mid-air. She was directly suspended, with her back flat against Anthony, by the latter's left arm, which if he had released she would have fallen plumb into the pinewood . . .

In a quiet voice Lyveden was speaking.

"Try and free your right arm."

Providentially, the girl's elbow was on a level with the edge, and at the expense of a torn sleeve she was able to work the arm free and on to the heather. This, when pulled, came away in her hand. Her fingers scratched upon the gravel frantically. No handfast was there. After a moment they abandoned the search.

"Now the other arm."

This was pinioned by her supporter's. By dint, however, of almost dislocating her shoulder, she managed to disengage it.

Again she waited for instructions.

None came, however, for Anthony could not think what to do. She could not turn, and he could not turn her. Neither could he haul them both up. He had not the

strength. As it was, the strain upon his two arms was frightful—too frightful to last . . . If she could have held herself for five seconds, he could have dragged himself up and the girl after him; but she could get no shadow of hold upon the ground. And all the time his arms were tiring—both of them—tiring rapidly . . .

The muscles under his arm-pits were aching unbearably, and there was a queer tingling in his right wrist. As he looked at this, he saw how it was quivering. His left arm was quivering, too. He could feel it. He realised with a shock that this was a movement over which he had no control. Nature, apparently, was rebelling against his will . . . And his fingers, crooked about the trunk of the sapling, were getting hot—making the bark greasy . . .

Convulsively he sought foothold for the thirtieth time, but, except for tweaking the agony in his chest, the effort was vain. Desperately he blinked the sweat out of his eyes . . .

Patch appeared upon the scene, snuffing the ground casually enough. His surprise to see his master in so strange an attitude was unmistakable. After a moment's reflection he decided that the position was that required by the rules of a new game in which he was intended to participate. He therefore made ready to play, and, lowering his head to his paws, put up his nose and barked joyously.

"Come here, Patch," said Anthony.

The tone was not that of the playground, and the terrier obeyed mechanically—circumspectly, too, though, for he disliked heights.

Anthony addressed his companion.

"When he's near enough, take hold of his collar. Hang on like grim death. Listen! My arm's giving out. I'm going to let you go while I pull myself up. It's the only chance. You're light, and he'll stick his toes in. Put a strain on him now, so that he's ready."

"I shall pull him over," said Valerie.

"No, you won't, dear. Do as I say. Quick!"

He almost screamed the last word.

The moment he felt the strain, the terrier resisted wildly. Planting his forefeet against the heather-roots, he refused with all the instinctive terror of the dumb animal, straining every muscle of his little thickset frame to avoid a closer acquaintance with that horrible brink . .

Very gently Anthony lowered his companion till her arm was resting upon the turf and the edge of the cliff was in her arm-pit. Then—

"Only a second, sweet," he said quietly, and let her go . . .

With a frightful heave he was on his stomach . . . on his thighs . . . his knees . . . feet. He turned, staggering.

His back hunched like a cat's, Patch was sliding forward.

In a flash Lyveden had stooped, caught Valerie's arm with both hands, dug in his heels and flung himself backward . . .

The three landed in a heap anyhow.

The moment he was at length detached from Valerie, Patch retired a good score of paces from the edge of the bluff. He had had enough of cliffs for the rest of his life. His master's interpretation of games was usually brilliant. This last was an exception. He could see nothing in it.

* * * * *

Betty Alison laid her hand orderly upon the green baize, with the complacent air of the player who is presenting his or her partner with all the essential factors of Grand Slam.

After staring fixedly at the display, her husband put his cards face downwards upon the table and covered his eyes.

"I suppose," he said brokenly, "I suppose you had a reason for overbidding me. I confess I can't see it, but I expect that's because it's too subtle."

"What d'you mean?" was the indignant reply. "Look at those"—and Betty pointed proudly to a queen-high flush of six diamonds.

"But you called hearts!"

Betty started. Then—

"So I did," she said guiltily. "I meant diamonds."

"I see" said her husband grimly. "After all, they're both red, aren't they?"

Here the laughter which Anne and Anthony had been endeavouring to restrain broke out tempestuously. Betty's procedure and bearing at the Bridge table would have unhinged an enthusiast, but since the four domestics played for amusement and a penny a hundred, her shortcomings hurt nobody and were highly diverting.

With a sorrowful look at his opponents, George proceeded laboriously to amass three tricks.

With the game went the rubber, and by mutual consent the party broke up. It was half-past nine, and all had duties to do. Anne went singing to fill Mrs. Bumble's

hot-water bottle, and Betty to heat the milk which it was her mistress's practice to consume at bed-time. Mr. Bumble, as became his sex, favoured something more substantial, and light refreshment in the shape of a ham sandwich and a bottle of beer before retiring suited him admirably. In Anthony he had a conscientious victualler. The sandwich was invariably fresh, the bottle of beer untasted, the glass clean. Mr. Bumble had marked these qualities and hugged himself.

This night, when Anthony entered the dressing-room, his master was sitting coatless upon a chair.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Lyveden, "I hope you've not been waiting."

"No, no," was the cheery reply. "Not your fault, me boy. I'm early. There now! Maria!" Mrs. Bumble appeared in her doorway and a red dressing-gown. "Look at that there tray, me dear. Ain't it a treat?"

"Deluscious!" said Mrs. Bumble.

"The very look," continued Mr. Bumble, "o' that sanwidge makes me that 'ungry you wouldden believe."

"May I cut you another one, sir?" said Anthony.

"'Ark at the boy," said his employer. "Wants ter kill me with kindness. Why, I could eat sixty, I could. But one's too many, reelly, at my time o' life."

"Joo drink beer, Tony?" inquired Mrs. Bumble.

"Yes, madam."

"Then go an' 'ave a nice bottle," she said, beaming.

"Thank you very much, madam."

"Yes, an' give George one," said Mr. Bumble, not to be outdone in generosity.

"Thank you, sir."

"Don't mention it," was the agreeable reply.

Anthony bade them "Good night" and left them breathing good-will.

As he descended the stairs, the particular verity of the adage which Valerie had quoted upon a memorable afternoon nearly three weeks ago appealed to him forcibly: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is." Certainly he was leading the humble life. Born and educated to administer, if not to rule, here was he fetching and carrying, a hewer of ham and a drawer of corks. He wondered if there were any other footmen who were also Companions of the Distinguished Service Order. That there were no other footmen who were so comfortably housed, he was sure. And Patch was in clover. Anthony reflected that he had much to be thankful for. A dinner of herbs was infinitely better than none at all. He was, you observe, unconsciously converting the proverb to his own use. Stalled oxen, with or without hatred, were not nowadays in his line. He had quite forgotten what they were like, and cared as little. Indeed, but for Valerie, his Ambition would have been dead. Even now it lay very sick. High stomachs are easily upset. But a nodding acquaintance with Hunger will make Ambition turn her face to the wall.

The duty of George Alison at nine-thirty was to take the dogs for a run. When he returned this evening to find Anthony in the act of setting two bottles of beer upon the table, he lifted up his voice and thanked Heaven that he had at least one friend.

"Thirteen perishing months," he concluded, "have I been in this house, and this is the first time I've ever had an extra rum ration. And that with my own flesh and blood, to say nothing of a lawful wife, running round the Bumbles from morning till night. I admit that on two several occasions your predecessor produced to me my master's liquor, but his ribald reception of my inquiry whether such production was authorised left me no alternative but to refuse to consume it."

"What's that?" said Betty, bustling into the room. "I recognised the tone of abuse, but I couldn't hear the words."

"My love," said George, "I was but remarking that beer is thicker than water. And now will you take my boots off before you clean them? Or clean them first and take them off afterwards?"

Betty Alison seated herself upon the table and raised her husband's glass to her lips.

"I looks," she said, "towards you."

When she set it down, the glass was half empty.

After a moment's silence—

"You've—you've left some," said her husband in a shaking voice.

"I know," she said. "That's because I can't drink any more. I hate beer." She slipped off the table with a yawn. "And now I'm going to bed. Don't let him sit up, Anthony. The car's ordered for nine, and he's got to get a new tire on."

"Where are we going?" said Lyveden.

"First meet of the season," said George. "I forgot to tell you. Buck's Folly, the Bumbles think, but they're not certain.

Deuce of a job for me, I tell you. Everybody drives anywhere and anyhow. You're backed into, you're always being called on to stop your engine, you're expected to be able to turn in a six-foot lane and to manœuvre on a marsh as if it was wood pavement. To do any good, you want something between a gyroscope and a Tank. A car's useless."

"Stacks of people, obviously," said Anthony.

"Unfortunately, yes. Hardened as I am, I'm not looking forward to that side. I suppose you hunted—in the old days."

Anthony nodded.

"At Oxford, and sometimes with the Blackmore Vale. My uncle had a house in Dorset."

"Ah! We used to do a bit with the Pytchley before—before the War."

For a moment nobody spoke.

One and all they had stumbled into the closet of Memory. Pictures of dead days stared at them—days when they had come and gone as they pleased, before there had been a new earth and, seemingly, a new heaven. Old sounds rang in their wistful ears, forgotten scents came floating out of the darkness . . . The closet grew into a gallery . . .

"Good night," said Betty quietly. "Don't sit up late."

She slipped out of the room.

It was a tired face that George Alison raised to Anthony.

"Thank your stars," he said jerkily, "that you aren't married. I don't matter. I don't mean I like service, but I'm well enough off. But Bet—poor Bet. Think what her life should be, and then look at what it is. And her father's worth half a million. He cut her off when she married me. I had enough for two then, so it didn't much matter. But now . . . She's wonderful—perfectly marvellous, but—it's hard to see her hands getting rough, man. Very hard. Her hands . . ."

Anthony crossed the room and touched him upon the shoulder.

"If I were married," he said, "I should feel just the same. And then there'd be two fools instead of one. My dear fellow, if Betty regretted her bargain, then she'd need your sympathy. As it is, so long as she's got you, d'you think she cares whether she wears sables or an apron?"

"But you saw how she dried up just now."

"Shall I tell you why?" said Anthony.

"Why?"

"Because to-morrow morning you're going to a meet in blue, and she's sorry it can't be pink."

The two finished their beer, and George retired somewhat comforted.

As he had predicted, their attendance of the meet the next morning was only effected at the expense of more patience than Alison possessed. He was forced, in fact, to borrow from Anthony. Indeed, he afterwards confessed that, but for the latter's presence, he should undoubtedly have committed an aggravated assault.

The vicinity of Buck's Folly proved to be suspiciously vacant, and upon arrival at the standpoint itself it was instantly and painfully clear that the Bumbles had been mistaken. A passing butcher, when interrogated, grinningly vouchsafed the information that the meet was at Saddle Tree Cross, a spot of which all the occupants of the car had heard, but the way to which no one of them could tell.

Swelling with importance, Mr. Bumble produced a map, and George's face fell. He had seen that map before—from a distance. So had others. No one but Mr. Bumble had ever seen it at close quarters. Unhappily for all concerned, the latter's accomplishments did not include map-reading, an omission distressingly obvious to everyone but himself. To follow his directions was fatal. Failure to appreciate his directions was at once easier and more disastrous. What was still more unfavourable was that, in possessing himself of the map, Mr. Bumble became possessed of a devil. There was no doubt about it. From being the most kindly of masters he became a snarling absurdity, whose endeavours simultaneously to study the canvas, observe the configuration of the countryside, and rave into the speaking-tube were consistently vain. George raised his eyes to heaven and prepared for the worst . . .

This came almost immediately.

After having obediently turned the car round, George was peremptorily advised that, after all, he had been facing the right way. Mr. Bumble rather unfairly added that in his opinion the fool who had made the map ought to be prosecuted. The warmth with which he committed this belief to the speaking-tube rendered it not so much inaudible as incoherent, and George, who believed it to be a further direction, had to ask him to repeat the remark. By the time Mr. Bumble had



"The two thrust through the screen and across the clearing. A moment later the thicket had swallowed them up."

realised that he was being addressed and had placed his ear to the tube, George had concluded his inquiry and was patiently listening at the opposite end. . . .

With such a beginning, the rest was easy. The wheels of wrath were greased. Thereafter it was no longer a question of revolution, but of speed. At times the velocity attained was appalling.

Seven hideous miles slunk staggering by.

Mrs. Bumble, of course, had been in tears from the outset. Anthony, as we know, was busily engaged in administering comfort, temporal and spiritual. The difficulty was to get George to take the nourishment.

"The fool's like a drowning man," he protested, "with his arms round your neck. Your only chance is to hit him under the jaw. Get out and do it."

Mr. Bumble had just formed and blasphemously announced the horrifying resolve to return to Buck's Folly and start all over again, when Anthony heard a horse whinny. In a flash he was on the running-board and touching his hat.

"I think we're just there, sir," he ventured.

Mr. Bumble hesitated, George set his foot upon the accelerator, and a moment later they swept round a bend to see the familiar medley of cars and dog-carts, bicycles and phaetons, saddle-horses and governess-cars, writhing below them upon a high-road into which the lane they were using almost immediately debouched.

With a sigh of relief, Mr. Bumble dropped the map and proceeded to mop his face. . . .

Comparatively, the chauffeur's troubles were over. After such a drubbing, the nuisance of the congestion to which they were soon contributing was like a flick on the collar, and ten minutes later the car was berthed safely with two or three others upon an apron of turf.

Mr. and Mrs. Bumble alighted, and George and Anthony were left to themselves.

Then another car squirmed out of the ruck of vehicles and came rolling on to the sward. The gentleman ensconced upon its back seat was for the saddle, and plainly glad of it. His careless, handsome face was radiant, his manner full of an easy, inoffensive confidence, his gaiety—to judge from his companions' laughter—infectious. His turnout was simple, but faultless. Despite the



"As in a dream, Valerie heard their voices getting fainter and fainter . . . Presently they died altogether, and she was left alone with the rain."

fact that he was sitting between Lady Touchstone and Valerie, Anthony liked the look of him.

Since their experience upon the edge of the cliff, Lyveden had not till now set eyes upon the lady. Unwilling to visit her home, he had inquired by letter how she was doing. After receiving two little notes, each of which assured him that she was not one penny the worse, he wrote no more. Letters and notes were sober and to the point. Anyone might have read them. The truth is, the two were love-shy.

Give to a dog a finer and meatier bone than he has ever dreamed of, and mark his reception of your favour. Ten to one he will be afraid of it. He will walk about the fragment delicately: possibly he will touch it with the tip of an envious tongue: presently he will lie down at a respectful distance, watching it with big eyes. The thing is too vast for him. He must have time to become familiar with his stupendous luck.

So with Miss French and Lyveden. The gods had tossed the two title-deeds of a dream so wonderful that they were frightened. The gift was too precious to be handled at once. Like the poor dog, they must have time . . .

You will understand, gentlemen, that this was no ordinary affair of love. Convenience had had no hand in it. My tale had been shorter if she had thrust but the

tip of a finger into the pie. Pity, Selfishness, Gratitude—none of the stock emotions went to the making of the foundations of this fabric. It was not founded at all. Neither had it grown out of friendship. It had no infancy. Had the two never met, it is probable that—circumstances permitting—each would some day have fallen in love with somebody else. And that would have been a regular business. Convenience, Friendship, and other hard-working match-makers would all have put shoulders to the wheel and clapped one another on the back when the banns were published. The fact that the two had met saved, in a way, infinite trouble.

Valerie had many swains, and more than a few women had looked twice at Anthony. Such hearts, however, as had bleated for their sympathy had either bleated altogether in vain, or, finding the sympathy vouchsafed not at all what they wanted, bleated more fiercely than before. All the same, the two were not seraphim. They were mortal enough, and, if more than ordinarily attractive, revealed upon close examination a very ordinary collection of failings. The wonder was not in themselves. The fact that their natures were exactly alike was, at the most, curious. It was true, nevertheless. Each wanted precisely what the other was ready to give. Their personalities agreed like two indentures—proved themselves mutual elixirs. The wonder began and ended when they encountered one another. It was then that the seed of love flashed into bloom. Miracles alone beget miracles. Parallel lines had met.

The sight of Valerie gladdened Anthony's eyes. He sat very still in his seat, staring under the wind-screen and wondering whether she would recognise his back. He hoped that it was not because of her mishap that she was not in a habit. He could hardly be expected to divine the true reason. This was, shortly, that the lady, who had expected to see him, could not enjoy a pastime from participation in which footmen are for a variety of reasons so rigorously debarred. Incidentally, she had seen Anthony before he had seen her, and the smile with which he had credited her companion's *bonhomie* was due to his presence alone. Had this been explained to the young sportsman, as one of Valerie's swains it would have spoiled his day. As it was, he emerged from the car with the genial air of one who is in high favour, and, after a word with a groom, who had come up bustling, mounted a good-looking grey and, waving his hat to the ladies, proceeded to join his fellows with his eyes sparkling and his chin on his shoulder.

"Mason," said Lady Touchstone.

The chauffeur, who had descended, sprang to the door.

"Open the door." The man did so, and her ladyship alighted. "I'm going to look at the hounds. You'd better come with me."

"Very good, my lady."

The pair moved off in single file.

Though the office was new to him, the dignity of Mason's demeanour was irreproachable. It was clear that the blood of flunkeys was in his veins. As a matter of fact, one hundred years before, his grandfather had done much escort duty, with a band on his hat and a cane in his hand. Though Mason did not know it, the manner had been bred in his bone.

"'Ere's a lady wants yer."

This was quite true. Miss French had not put it so bluntly, but it was not her fault that the messenger she had selected knew a footman when he saw one.

Major Anthony Lyveden thanked his informant with a smile. Had it been Caliban himself that had growled the message, the smile would have been as ready. Such a summons lost nothing in the telling.

George received the intimation that his colleague would be back in a minute apathetically. He was yet in some dudgeon. Beyond heaving a sigh charged with the resignation of a martyr who remembers that he has left his gloves in the torture-chamber, he evinced no interest at all.

Anthony crossed the turf to where Miss French sat smiling in a brown landaulette, and touched his hat. Appearances had to be kept up. Valerie inclined her head gravely enough, but the look with which she honoured his action was not of this world. Anthony felt astoundingly rich.

"How are you?" he asked anxiously.

"Perfectly all right."

"Sure?"

Valerie nodded, smiling.

"I wasn't even tired the next day," she said. "'Were your arms very stiff?"

"Only for a day or two."

"And Patch?"

"As right as rain."

"Will you be free on Sunday?" said Valerie.

"From two o'clock on."

"Will you come to Bell Hammer?"

"I will," said Anthony.

"I'll come to meet you with the two-

seater. To-morrow I'm going away. Aunt Harriet has to go to London. Have—have you been back . . . since ? "

" To your window ? "

" To our window," said Valerie.

Anthony nodded.

" Yes," he said quietly. " I—I can't keep away."

It was true. The place fascinated him. Tremendous happenings had made it a shrine. Already worshipful as Valerie's bower, the ledge was freshly consecrate to two most excellent saints—Love Confessed and Life Triumphant.

" I thought you had," said Valerie. " I saw your footsteps. And—oh, please don't go so close to the edge, Anthony. Promise me you won't. It—it frightens me so."

Love lent the words an earnestness which there was no mistaking. My lady leaned forward, with her hand gripping the woodwork. There was a strained, pleading look upon the beautiful face, the proud lips humbling themselves, the glorious eyes beggars—Royalty upon its knees.

Quite naturally, Anthony's heart answered her.

" I promise, sweet," he said.

The vocative transfigured the lady. Anthony found himself mirrored in two dew-burning stars. To deck her favourite, Nature had robbed the firmament. To see such larceny, it is not surprising that the round world stood still . . .

With a supreme effort Anthony pulled himself together.

" Patch is too funny," he said. " He'll come as far as the bank—you know, below the thicket—and not a step further. He just stands there and wags his tail apologetically. And there at the foot of the bank he waits until I return."

Valerie laughed merrily.

" Poor little dog," she said. " It was enough to——"

" I say, Val, did I leave my flask in the car ? "

The two had been too much absorbed to observe the return of the fresh-faced youngster, and the latter's words cut their communion short, much as the sudden rasp of curtain-rings scatters the rear of slumber. It was providential that the world was moving again. The suspension of perpetual motion would have been bound to excite remark. As it was, the newcomer was upon the very edge of staring, when——

" Let me introduce Mr. Every—Major Lyveden," said Valerie. The two men nodded mechanically and murmured politeness. " Yes, you did, Peter. Here you are." She plucked the lost property from the bowels of the seat and rose to restore it. " By the way," she added adroitly, " now's your chance. Major Lyveden'll tell you whether you ought to wash a horse's legs."

Thus appealed to—

" Unless," said Anthony, " you've got a groom in a million, I shouldn't advise it. It means mud-fever."

" There you are," said Valerie, doubly triumphant.

The youth's face was a study. Respect was fairly bundling Astonishment out of the way. Anthony had spoken as one having authority, and Every was visibly impressed.

" You really think so, sir ? "

With one accord Valerie and Anthony smiled. The employment of the title was at once so irregular and so appropriate. Instinct had shown herself to be above raiment. Surely no manner of man ever was paid so exquisite a compliment.

A motor-horn coughed, and Anthony glanced over his shoulder. Then—

" I must go," he said quietly. " Good-bye."

He touched his cap with a smile and left them.

Every gazed after him with his hat in his hand. Then he looked at Valerie with wide eyes.

" But — but he's a footman," he said stupidly.

* * * * *

When upon the following day Anthony admitted that he had never seen the view from The Beacon, the Alisons, all three, cried out upon the omission with no uncertain voice.

The four were breakfasting.

" But," declared Anne, " you simply must see it. It's the most wonderful view in the world."

Anthony doubted this. He did not say so, of course, but he would have staked a month's wages that he could have shown them a finer. As it was, he expressed politely enthusiastic astonishment.

" It is, really," said Betty. " And the tints at this time of year—why, even George raves about it ! "

" That's right," said her husband. " Never lose an opportunity of insult. Why ' even George ' ? Can't a chauffeur have a soul ? "

"Who went to sleep at the Russian Ballet?" said Betty.

"Go on," said George. "Rake over the muck-heap. And what if I did? The music suggested slumber. I merely adopted the suggestion."

"Did it also suggest that you should snore?" said his wife. "Or was that your own idea?"

George touched Anthony on the arm and nodded towards the speaker.

"Look at the scorn in that eye," he said. "See? The one that's looking our way."

With an air of unutterable contempt, Betty lighted a cigarette and then hurled the matchbox at her unsuspecting spouse. The missile ricochetted off his chin and fell noisily into the cup of tea which was halfway to his lips . . .

When order had been restored—

"He must see it at once," said Betty. "Before the leaves fall."

"The view, or the ballet?" said George.

"Idiot!" She turned to Anne. "Why don't you take him this afternoon? It's his day out, and you know you can always go."

"Yes, please do," said Anthony.

He could not very well have said anything else. Besides, Anne was all right. He liked her. There was, of course, but one woman in the world. Still, Anne was a good sort, and he would not have hurt her feelings for anything.

The matter was arranged then and there.

Seven hours later the two, with Patch, were tramping over a rising moor towards a dense promise of woodland which rose in a steep slope, jagged and tossing. This day the ragamuffin winds were out—a plaguy, blustering crew, driving hither and thither in a frolic that knew no law, buffeting either cheek, hustling bewildered vanes, cuffing the patient trees into a dull roar of protest that rose and fell, a sullen harmony, joyless and menacing. The skies were comfortless, and there was a sinister look about the cold grey pall that spoke of winter and the pitiless rain and the scream of the wind in tree-tops, and even remembered the existence of snow.

"I wish it was a better day," said Anne. "It's always worth seeing, but you won't see so far to-day, and there's no sun."

Anthony glanced at the sky.

"Unless," he said, "it's worth seeing when the trees are bare, it's just as well we're going there to-day. That sky means mischief. Are you sure you're warm enough?"

Anne laughed.

"Supposing I said I wasn't," she said, "what would you do about it? Give me your coat?"

Anthony stood still.

"I should take you home—quick," he said gravely.

Honestly he hoped that she would waver. He had never wanted to come. Left to himself, he and Patch would have walked —elsewhither. Had he not known that Valerie was away, he would have excused himself at breakfast. Not for anything in the world would he have forfeited a chance of meeting her. Poor Anne's feelings would have had to rough it.

"I'm as warm as toast," said Miss Alison cheerfully. "And I know you don't want to come," she added, bubbling, "but you've just got to. You'll thank me afterwards."

Fiercely as he protested his innocence, Anthony felt extremely guilty. He had, it seemed, committed a breach of good taste, which must be repaired forthwith. He determined to be very nice to Anne. This should not have been difficult, for she was full of good points.

Fate had not been kind, but Anne found no fault with her heritage. Indeed, her temper was infectiously healthy. For years now Fortune had never piped to her, but that did not keep her from dancing. In the circumstances, that she should have been so good to look upon seemed almost hard . . .

The two passed on.

It was a way Anthony had never gone, and, once in the thick of the woods, he could not have told where he was. Anne, apparently, knew her line backwards, for she climbed steadily, chattering all the time and taking odd paths and random grass-grown tracks with an unconscious confidence which was almost uncanny. More than once she turned to strike across some ground no foot had charted, each time unerringly to find the track upon the far side waiting to point them upward—sometimes gently, and sometimes with a sharp rise, but always upward.

For all that, the pace his companion set was almost punishing, and Anthony was on the point of pleading a respite, when—

"Almost there now," panted Miss Alison. "Round to the right here. and——"

The rest of the sentence was lost upon Anthony, and is of no consequence to us.

As he was rounding the corner, he had turned to whistle for Patch. For two very excellent reasons the whistle was never delivered. The first was that the Sealyham was only five paces in rear. The second was that he was standing quite still in the middle of the path, wagging his tail apologetically. .

For a moment Anthony stared at him. Then he swung round, to find himself face to face with a broad natural bank, some thirty feet high.

* * * * *

When Valerie French, who had come by way of the finger-post, saw Patch dormant at the foot of the broad bank, she could have jumped for joy.

At the last minute rheumatism had laid its irreverent hand upon the patrician muscles of Lady Touchstone's back, and the visit to Town had been summarily postponed. Valerie, who should have been sorry, was undeniably glad. She could not communicate with Anthony, but there was a bare chance that she might do better than that. What afternoons he had free she did not know. How he employed such as he had, he had told her in plain terms. She was, of course, to see him on Sunday, but that was four days away. Besides, she wanted to meet him upon that gravel cliff —that window-sill whose freehold they shared. High matters were on the edge of settlement. It was appropriate that they should there be settled where, in a mad moment, Fate had staked upon one cast all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory—staked them and lost them. That it was now but a question of taking possession of their inheritance, Valerie never doubted. In this she was right. The crooked way of Love had been made straight: only the treading of it remained—a simple business. That he had saved her life did not weigh with Anthony at all. That Death had summoned them, looked in their eyes, and let them go—together, made all the difference. It was as though a hand had written upon the wall . . .

The sight, then, of the terrier verified hopes which she had been afraid to harbour. She had wanted so much, and it had all come to pass. She had wanted to meet her man, to see him ere he knew she was there, to find him there at the window, to come delicately behind him, to have him turn and see her, to mark the sudden gladdening of his dear grey eyes . . .

Tremulously she ascended the tiny path and passed a-tiptoe into the thicket . . .

You would have sworn it an elf that stole across the clearing beyond . . .

As she glided into cover—

"Rain," said Anthony. "Now we're for it. No coats, no umbrella, no nothing. Anne, you're in for a wetting."

"Won't be the first time," said Anne cheerfully.

"Well, come on, any way," said Anthony. "The woods'll shelter us for a while, and then——"

"I shall have a bath," said Anne. "A nice hot bath directly I get in. You know, all steaming and——"

"Will you come on?" said Anthony, laughing.

The two thrust through the screen and across the clearing. A moment later the thicket had swallowed them up.

As in a dream, Valerie heard their voices getting fainter and fainter . . .

Presently they died altogether, and she was left alone with the rain. This fairly pelted upon her, but she never moved. The truth is, she never noticed it.

A sudden rush of wind whipped a strand of her dark hair loose and flung it across her lips, but she never moved.

After a little while the wind died too, and for the second time she was left alone with the rain.

* * * * *

A letter which Monseigneur Forest received some four days later was brought to him in the garden. The Roman sun was hot, and the prelate sat down upon a low stone seat and mopped his brow before he opened the envelope.

Dear Uncle John,

Thanks so much for your letter. I ought to have written before. After all, I've troubled you for nothing. I was all wrong about the man—made a frightful mistake. I'll tell you some day—perhaps.

Love,

Yours,

Valerie.

As was his practice, Monseigneur Forest read the note twice. The face which he raised from the paper wore a look of amused impatience.

If you remember, the dignitary was no fool.

The fifth story in this series will appear in the next number.

EASTER CUSTOMS

AND ANNUAL OBSERVANCES OF THE SEASON IN VARIOUS LANDS

By R. C. TRAFFORD

THE name Easter is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *eāstre*, akin to the Latin word *aurora*, which in turn comes from the Greek *eōs* or *auōs*, meaning "dawn." In this way the strange fable which the men of old conferred upon the Dawn, rega ding Aurora as the Opener, with rosy fingers, of the Eastern gates, is connected by name with the season of rejoicing over the Resurrection of the Christian Redeemer.

The pages of mythology show many a Pagan custom which the early Christian Church adapted to its own purposes. Even the buns which are for us associated with Good Friday must be linked with the sacrificial bread, called *boun*, which was once laid upon the altars of Zeus. Cecrops, the founder of Athens, who, nearly sixteen hundred years before Christ's birth, led a colony to Attica, is said to have tendered *boun* upon the altar he raised there to that god.

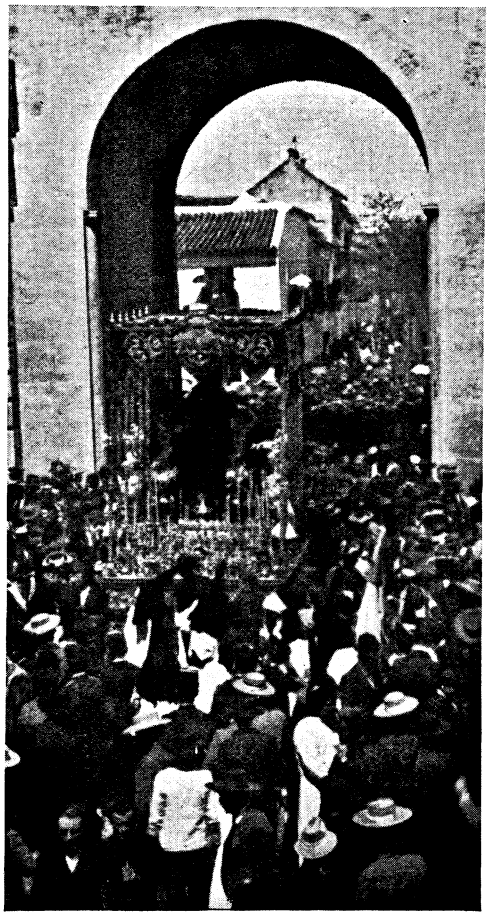


Photo by [*Underwood.*

A SPANISH CUSTOM: THE PROCESSION OF THE INCIDENTS OF THE PASSION THROUGH THE STREETS OF SEVILLE.

First in solemnity of local association of those customs which are solely Christian in origin and symbolism, as distinct from points of Christian ritual which have been adapted from the pagan rites preceding them, stand the several ceremonies with which the Greek Church celebrates Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter, in Jerusalem itself, at the actual places where the great drama of Holy Week and Eastertide was enacted. On Maundy Thursday a vast crowd of pilgrims assembles to witness the ceremony at which the Greek Patriarch reads to his twelve bishops the Gospel account of the washing of the disciples' feet by the Saviour before the Last Supper, after which the priests commemorate the episode by washing the feet of the twelve bishops. This and other rites performed on Maundy Thursday give the day its distinctive name, inasmuch as they are based on Christ's injunction to His disciples "that ye love one another," the word "Maundy" being derived from the Latin *mandatum*, and Thursday being the *dies mandati*, the day on which this mandate was first given. On Good Friday comes the solemn procession of the Stations of the Cross



Photo by] [*Underwood.*

THE IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY OF MAUNDY THURSDAY IN JERUSALEM, AT WHICH THE GREEK PATRIARCH WASHES THE FEET OF TWELVE BISHOPS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET BY CHRIST AT THE LAST SUPPER, THIS SCENE HAVING BEEN RE-ENACTED FOR CENTURIES AS AN EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY AND CHARITY.

along the Via Dolorosa, following the actual route trodden by the Redeemer from the Judgment Hall to the Hill of Calvary, a pause being made at each spot traditionally associated with the incidents of that appointed journey. On the ensuing day, Easter Eve, there is a procession through the streets to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for the ceremony of the Descent of the Holy Fire upon the altar, which symbolises the rekindling of Light and the Festival of the Resurrection. It is interesting to note how the early Church contrived to connect this idea with the almost immemorial bonfires associated with the earlier pagan Spring festival of "Eastre" in many districts of England.

Curiously enough, simultaneously with these Christian celebrations there takes place a Mohammedan festival, connected with the death of Moses, concerning which there are several legends, some of which are in the Talmud. The Mohammedans preserve a myth of a great war between the spirits of

good and the spirits of evil, waged over his departing soul, and they perform pilgrimages to his legendary burial-place on Mount Nebo, above Jericho. This identification of the burial-place of the great Hebrew ruler is an interesting illustration of the

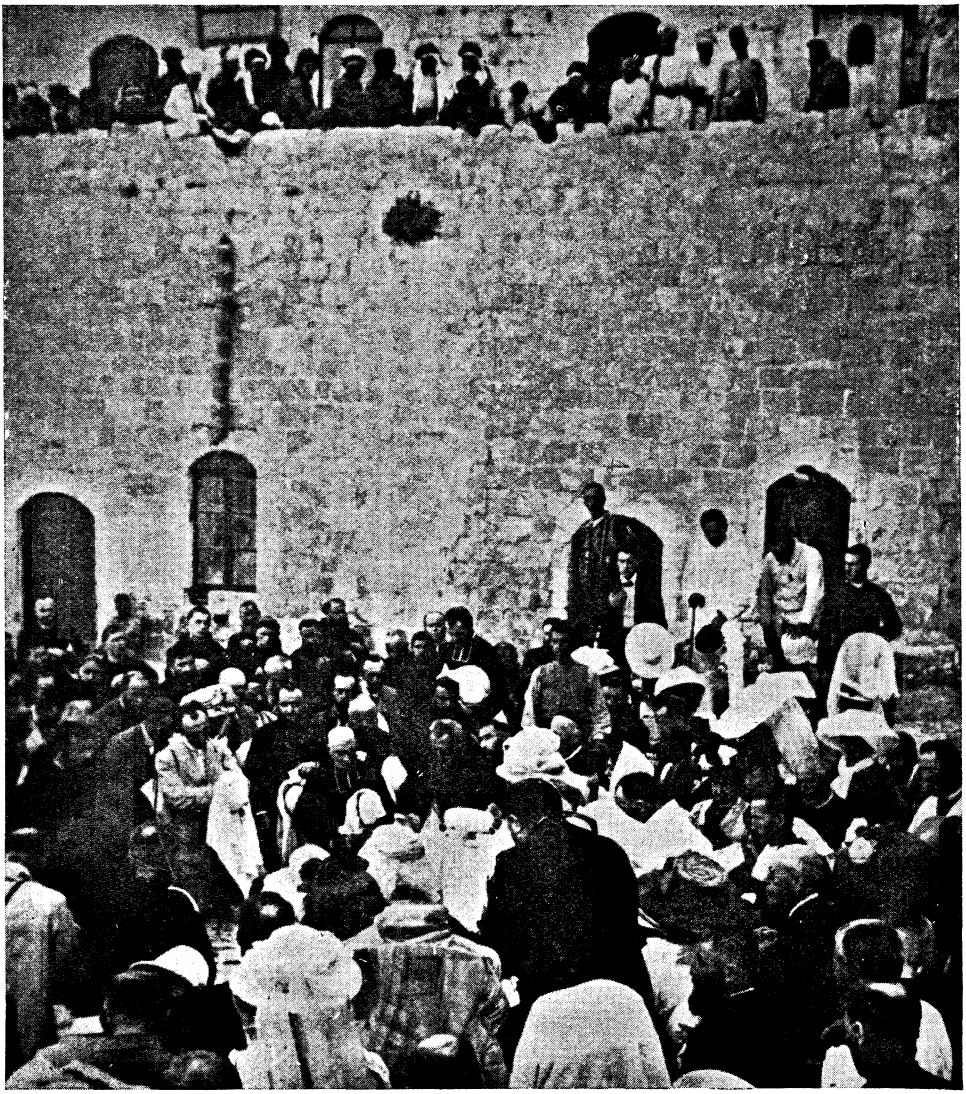


Photo by] [*Underwood.*

MODERN PILGRIMS MAKING SUPPLICATIONS AT THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ALONG THE VIA DOLOROSA, THE ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE SAVIOUR FROM THE JUDGMENT HALL TO CALVARY: THE FIRST STATION, A SQUARE PAVING-STONE IN THE BARRACKS, ON WHICH TRADITION CLAIMS THAT CHRIST STOOD BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE.

divergence of the Bible and the Talmud on a matter of historical detail, for the Book of Deuteronomy says quite explicitly: "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

An interesting story links with the service of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem one of the most ancient Easter customs of Italy, the Flight of the Dove in the Piazza del Duomo, Florence. This ceremony dates back to the time when a member of the Pazzi family carried some of the Holy Fire from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem to Florence. This flame, which has ever since been jealously guarded as one of the most holy of the Duomo's treasures, is at Easter carried to the high altar in

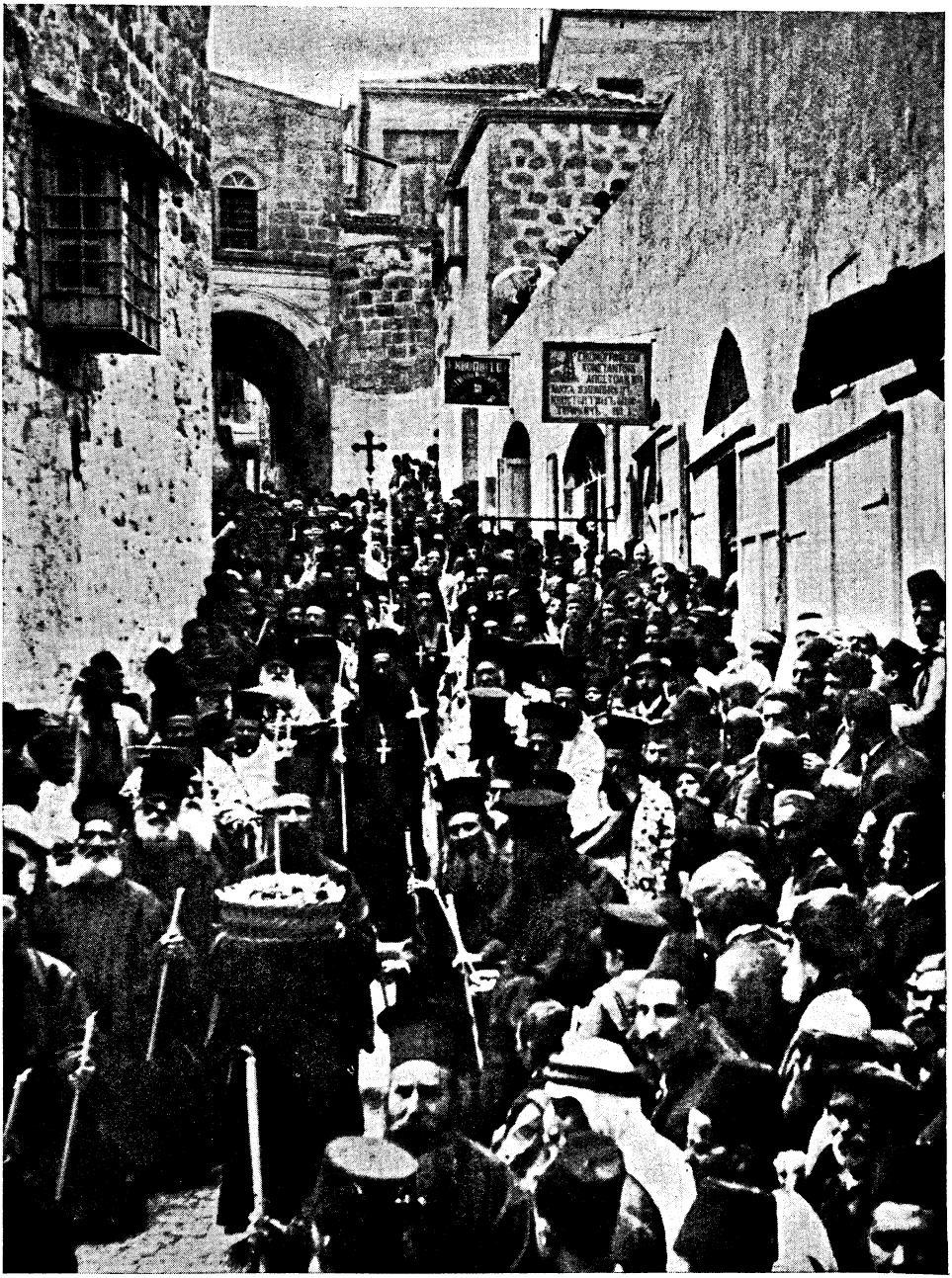


Photo by] *[Underwood.*

THE PROCESSION TO THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN JERUSALEM, ON EASTER EVE, FOR THE CEREMONY COMMEMORATING THE TRADITIONAL DESCENT OF THE HOLY FIRE.

procession, and from it a lamp in the form of a dove is lit, and the movement of this lamp, in semblance of flight, is held to symbolise the prospects of the year's harvest.

Even more closely connected with the local commemoration of Good Friday in Jerusalem is the observance of the date in Rome at the Scala Santa, for that famous stairway is, by a very ancient tradition, held to be the actual fabric of the flight of steps down which Christ passed on His way from the Judgment Hall of Pilate to Calvary, the twenty-eight marble steps, according to this tradition, having been transferred from Jerusalem to Rome by the Empress Helena.

One of the rites common to most countries, which, under superficial differences, can be traced to the first crude philosophy of homage, is the procession, the formal moving line, ceremonial and portentous, which has from all recorded time been part of the pomp of public festivals. Men long since strained their lungs in extravagant acclamatory hymns to Bacchus or Osiris, to Isis or Ceres. Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Greece, and Italy, China, India, Persia, all had their processions, with the clang of castanets, the blare of brass, long before the Christian era. Adapted to express a Christian idea are many similar processions to-day, and one of the oldest of those associated with Easter Day is that which passes from the Vatican into St. Peter's.

Another Eastertide procession of very ancient date is that which forms part of the Rumanian ceremony known as "The Blessing of the Waters" of the country. The Patriarch and clergy, followed by princes and nobles and representative citizens, proceed from a service in the cathedral at Bucharest to the banks of the River Dambovita, into which a golden cross—kept in the cathedral for this annual purpose—is flung, and from which it is afterwards recovered by divers.

Spain is the scene of several public processions of ancient origin each Easter, the most solemn of which is that of the principal incidents of the Passion, represented in groups of effigies, which are borne shoulder-



Photo by] [*Underwood.*

THE EASTER PILGRIMAGE OF MOHAMMEDANS FROM JERUSALEM TO THE LEGENDARY BURIAL-PLACE OF MOSES.



Photo by] [*Underwood.*

THE EASTER MORNING SERMON AT THE "CALVAIRE" AT TROMENIE, IN BRITTANY.

high through the streets. Each incident is portrayed, and the story is reverently followed by vast crowds of spectators. Not the least curious of the Holy Week observances of Spain is the one which takes place at Orduna — a small town amongst the mountains not far from Bilbao—at daybreak on Good Friday. This is known as the Procession of Silence. At its head walk men dressed in black, carrying lanterns. They are followed by others swathed in black robes, with conical-shaped head-

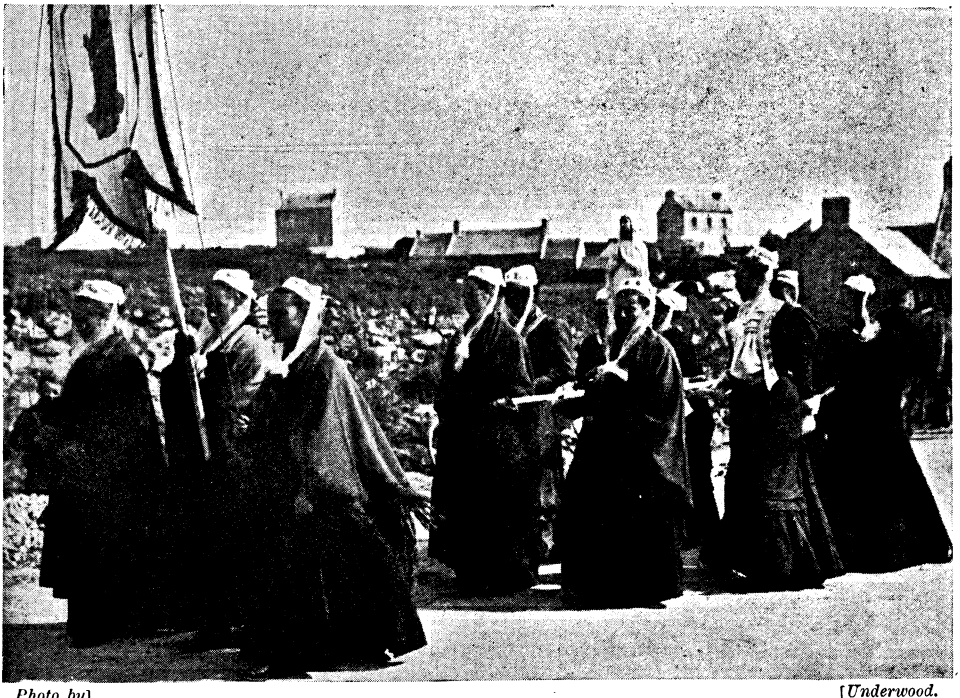


Photo by] [*Underwood.*

A GOOD FRIDAY PROCESSION AT PORSPODER, NORTHERN FRANCE.

dresses, and wearing masks, who bear upon their shoulders a heavy crucifix, before which march two of these strangely-attired figures, rousing the sleeping people of the town by proclamation, for which they use curious, large speaking-trumpets. A penitential procession of the townspeople follows.

Holy Saturday is the occasion of a great ceremonial at Seville, which culminates in the cathedral with a solemn service of preparation for Easter.

Another of the events of Holy Week in Spain is the royal act of the washing of the feet of certain humble folk by the King and Queen in memory, as in the Maundy Thursday service at Jerusalem, of the act of Christ at the Last Supper. This royal office was performed in England by our monarchs up to the reign of James the Second, and William the Third first deputed the task to an Almoner. It is on record that Queen Elizabeth herself performed this



THE MAUNDY CEREMONY AT THE SPANISH COURT: THE QUEEN WASHING THE FEET OF POOR WOMEN.

From a drawing by S. Begg.

act when in residence at Greenwich. The particular occasion which is most fully explained is that Maundy Thursday when she had reached the thirty-ninth year of her age, this particular occasion thirty-nine of them. The Queen was attended by thirty-nine gentlewomen of her household, and after the Sub-Almoner had done his actually effective



THE ROYAL MAUNDY CHARITIES OF ENGLAND: THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE KING'S GIFTS OF CLOTHING AND MONEY TO AGED MEN AND WOMEN IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

From a drawing by W. Hatherell.

and, the number of poor persons assembled to participate in this act of humility being intended to correspond with the years numbered by the Sovereign, there were on work with warm water and sweet herbs, the Queen herself knelt, laved each foot, made the sign of the Cross above the toes, and then yet more humbly bent down and kissed

the place so symbolised. Thirty-nine garments and thirty-nine coins and thirty-nine platters of food were then distributed amongst the thirty-nine poor people.

In a modern version of a similar occasion at the Spanish Court, which is here represented in picture, the Queen who is performing the same symbolic act of charity and humility is one still well remembered as a princess of the Royal House of England.

In England Maundy Thursday is celebrated by a picturesque ceremony in Westminster Abbey, at which the distribution of the King's Easter bounties to-day, if shorn of the courtly character of mediæval times, is still performed with some ecclesiastical pomp and circumstance. There the Lord High Almoner, the Sub-Almoner, and the Chaplains of the Lord High Almoner, his secretary and his assistant secretary, are met by the Dean and the Canons and the minor Canons and the Vergers of the Canons, and conducted to their places in the Sacrarium. From here, after a full choral service, purses numbering the years attained to by King George V.—the red containing one pound, and one pound ten in lieu of the garments originally given, and the white containing a silver penny, or two penny, three penny, and four penny pieces—are conferred upon such meritorious and disabled persons, in number corresponding to the years of the King, who have acquired the recommendation of the clergy of the parishes whence the recipients of the bounty are selected. These gifts are known as "Maundy" Money.



Photo by] [*L.N.A.*

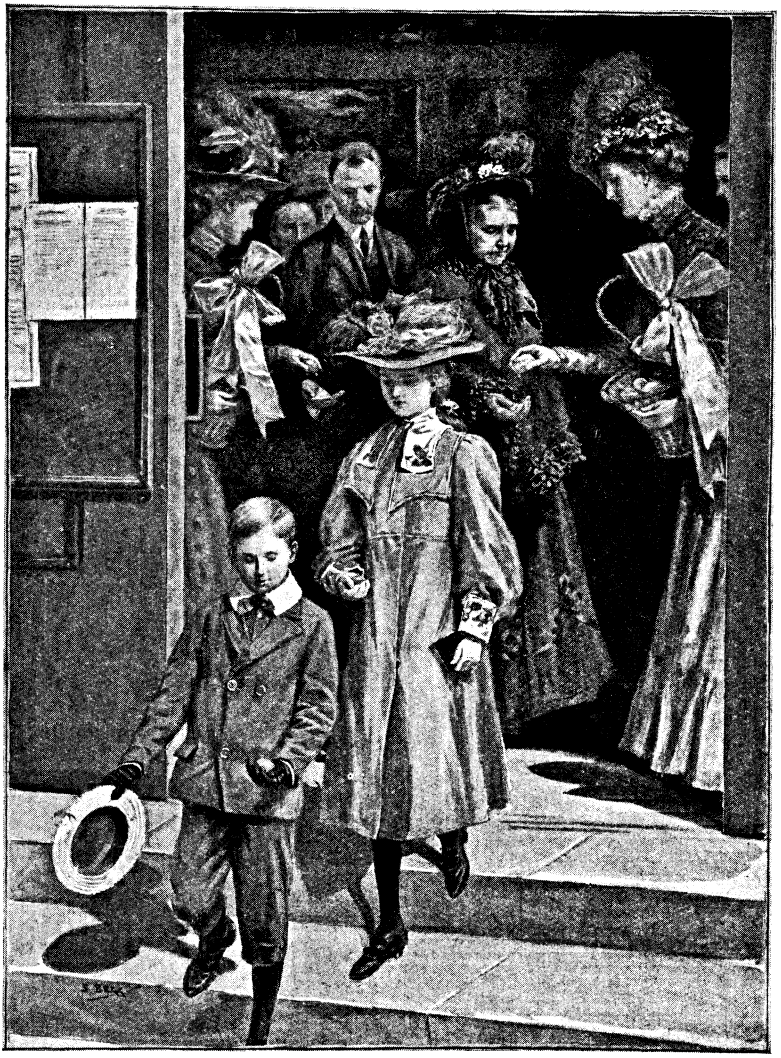
AN OLD LONDON CUSTOM: DISTRIBUTING SIXPENCES ON A GRAVE IN THE CHURCHYARD OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW-THE-GREAT.

Among the Holy Week ceremonies of France are several customs of unique association with the places at which they are celebrated, their details being unknown in any other place in quite the same form. At the little town of Mende, in the Department of Lozère, for instance,

there takes place a procession known as the Brotherhood of White Penitents, in which the participants carry emblems of the Passion; but the Penitents are professional penitents of a day, being local townspeople, who go through their imaginary humiliation for the sake of those alms which they collect in the cause of charity.

One of the most curious Good Friday customs localised in London is that of hanging a cluster of hot cross buns from a beam in the ceiling of "The Widow's Son" public-house — a custom which is traceable to the once common belief, still popular in parts of the country, that bread marked with a cross and hung in a house will prevent all bread baked there during the year becoming stringy or reamy. Another curious London Good Friday custom takes place in the churchyard of St. Bartholomew-the-Great, in Smithfield, when twenty-one poor aged women receive a bounty of sixpences, which have to be picked up from the slab of a particular tomb. The origin of this custom is unknown, for the records have been burnt.

On Easter Day in the Greek churches priests hooded in black take the figure of Christ from a large cross and lay it upon a canopied bier covered with flowers and draped with bows of crape. The members of the congregation then file past, make their devotions, and take one of the flowers. Mothers hold up their infants to kiss the sacred figure. Among other Easter Day customs in the Balkans is that of the giving of Easter cakes, marked with a cross like our "hot cross buns," by women of the well-to-do classes in Rumania to Christians who are prisoners.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF EGGS AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY, WOOLNOTH, ON EASTER MORNING.

From a drawing by S. Begg.

A picturesque, not to say romantic, Easter Morning custom is one that is in vogue in Hungary. The young peasant men hide with buckets of water and wait

for the girls, who are wont to assemble in the early hours of Easter Day round the wells, where tradition says they may discern the faces of their future husbands in the water. The men stealthily approach and splash the girls from their pails, and the victims must make no cry for fear the spell should be broken. It is considered unlucky for any girl not to get her Easter Morning drenching.

In Corsica the arrival of Easter Day is celebrated by a *feu de joie* in the streets, guns and pistols being fired all through the morning both from the windows of houses and in the thoroughfares by all and sundry.

A simple but picturesque Easter Day custom is one which obtains in Brittany. It is called by the peasants "Pardons," and, as far as possible, the young Breton girls wait until that ceremony to make their first Communion, to which they go in procession, wearing their white Confirmation dresses and caps.

A midnight procession of priests is an ancient feature of the Russian Easter. A curious Russian observance of the season is the picnicking round the graves of relatives. It is no uncommon sight to see old men and maidens, young men and children, taking part in this form of commemoration of the dead.

The prominence of the egg in the symbolism of the rites of Eastertide is common to all countries in which the season is celebrated at all. As De Gebelin shows in his work on the religious history of the calendar, the custom of giving eggs at Spring-time festivals of one kind or another was common to the ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Gauls, amongst whom the egg was held to be the emblem of the universe. Exactly why the egg was then dyed with different colours appears to be untraceable, but at a later date eggs were coloured red by Christians in commemoration of the Blood of the Redeemer. The Egyptians held eggs to be a sacred emblem of the renovation of mankind after the Deluge.

In the Christian Churches it has always been customary to regard the egg as emblematical of the new life typified by the Resurrection.

Now that the Easter Egg survives mainly in forms of social and domestic custom in which religious association is but little

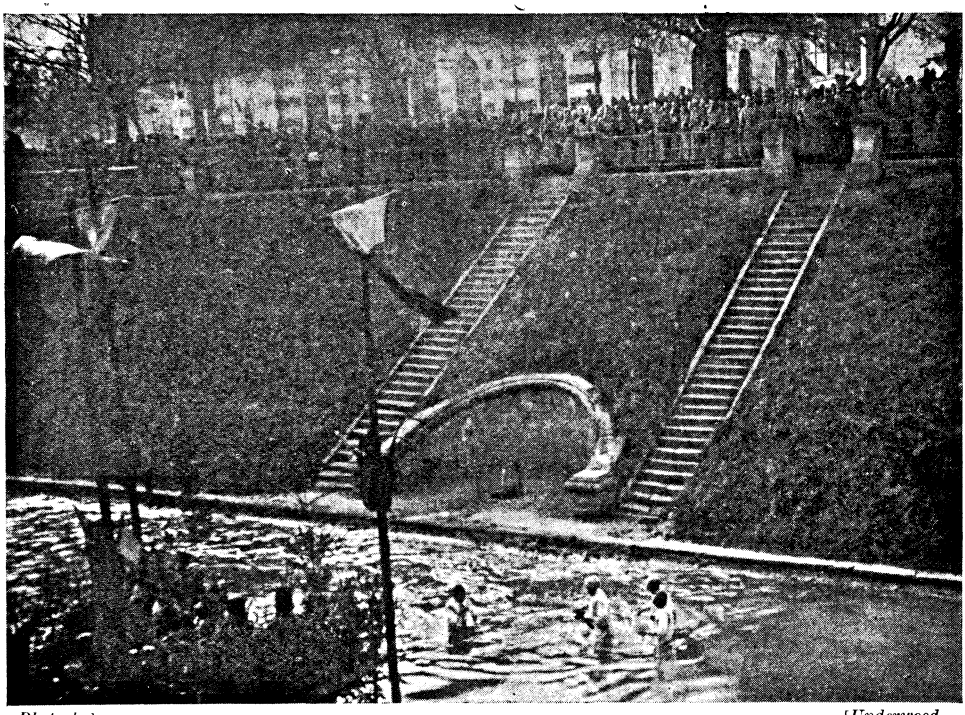


Photo by] [*Underwood.*

THE CEREMONY KNOWN AS "THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS" AT BUCHAREST: DIVERS RECOVERING THE GOLDEN CROSS AFTER IT HAS BEEN FLUNG INTO THE DAMBOVITA RIVER.

remembered, it is interesting to note one instance of a City of London church which still follows the ancient custom of egg-giving, this ceremony being maintained at the Church of St. Mary, Woolnoth, where every member of the congregation is presented with an egg after the morning service on Easter Day.

In addition to the many solemn services of Holy Week and the festal ones of Eastertide in our churches, there have long survived in the British Isles some ancient customs which were doubtless more definitely connected with the religious ideas of the season in their original forms than in their later phases of mere traditional holiday celebration.

One such curious old custom which was originally supposed to typify the raising of a body from a grave, when the action was associated with the Church's season of Easter, is that known as "lifting," which survived until quite recently in the Northern counties of England and in Wales. Young men used to carry a chair and parade the streets until they met some comely lass, who was induced to seat herself in the chair, which was then hoisted shoulder-high, or even higher, three times, and the toll of a kiss, or the alternative of a fine in money, taken before the girl was released. On Easter Tuesday the actors in the game shifted the parts, the girls doing the "lifting," and the men paying toll.

Some customs appear to be merely local, or to have arisen from the general festivity of the season rather than from any pertinence to it. Thus Ashton-under-Lyne has a ceremony known as "Riding the Black Knight." It arose in feudal times, when one Sir John de Assheton, mounted on a richly caparisoned black horse, collected his own rents and such fines as he elected to exact from his tenantry. He was apparently a harsh landlord, and on one Easter Monday met his death at the hands of some oppressed tenant. The custom of "Riding the Black Knight," at one time accompanied by some pageantry, has fallen from its grand estate, although the occasion is still commemorated under its original title.

The Vicar of Hallaton, in Leicestershire, holds a piece of land under the curious condition that on Easter Monday he "shall provide two hare pies, a quantity of ale, and two dozen penny buns, to be scrambled for on the rising ground called Hare Pie Bank." The complying with this quaint bequest forms a genial part of Hallaton's Easter celebrations.

A feature of Eastertide in Serbia is a sword dance performed by girls in the village streets, to the music of bagpipes. The national *festa* dresses which the girls wear turn the dance into a whirling kaleidoscope of colour, and the scene is the gayest of the gay. The captain of the throng directs the movements of her sisters with a flashing sword, and she wears a cuirassier's helmet and breastplate. Yet another local custom is the one at Signa, a small village amongst the vineyards which surround Florence. It is known as the *festa* of "Beata Giovanna," and commemorates a woman of the place. On Easter Monday gifts pour into the church of Signa, and these are borne in procession by an ass, upon whose back there is seated the prettiest child Signa can produce.

The Moravians celebrate Easter with several ancient ceremonies, which in one respect recall the "Waits" of Christmastide, for on Easter Sunday, very early in the morning, a choir sets out through town or village, and the people are awakened and warned that it is time to prepare themselves for church, for the early services, by the playing and singing of old hymns.

A HOLIDAY SONG

DEAR pretty maid with the white sun-bonnet,
Will you come to the fair with me?
Your pretty little bodice, with the rosy pattern on it,
Is as pretty as a flower can be.
Your good little face is a glory and a grace
That lights the world, the whole pretty world, for me,
So give me your hand, and hearken to the band,
And come to the fair with me!

Oh, dear pretty maid, your hand is like a flower—
A flower I would lay against my heart.
Let me hold your hand a minute. A flower dies in an hour,
But an hour is a life, sweetheart.
The music and the sights, and the laughter and the lights,
And the flutter and the fun of the fair,
I would give them all and welcome for a fireside bright
And a dear face waiting there.

Oh, dear pretty maid, you are summer, you are roses,
You are may-flowers and gilliflowers and spring,
You are all the scent and sweetness of a thousand garden posies,
My dear, let us go and buy the ring!
Let us go and buy the ring, the fair gold ring,
To bind for us a nosegay of the flowers that cannot die,
And we'll call the banns on Sunday, and be wed three weeks come Monday—
Oh, dear pretty maid, say "Aye."

E. NESBIT.

THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES

By MURRAY FISHER

ILLUSTRATED BY WYNDHAM ROBINSON

"THEN all that you have to do is to pull your socks up and find a suitable man to propose to!" said Magda, lighting an Egyptian cigarette with a wax match and an air of decision. "My dear Barbara, I can't see anything very agitating in that. And, after all, it is leap year."

Barbara's brown eyes began to look rather moist, but, having relieved her feelings by the violent pummelling of a flight of black storks on a blue silk cushion, she again faced her female *fidus Achates* without capitulating to the desire for tears.

"I thought you'd understand," she said, "but you don't a bit. Supposing that you had had a guardian who insisted on taking his sense of humour with him to the family vault, you wouldn't feel so matter-of-fact, I can tell you! Supposing that your guardian had left quantities of money to the first of his wards to show a marriage certificate to his fusty old lawyer, you wouldn't be sitting there so calmly smoking those beastly cigarettes!"

"How ever many wards had he got?" asked Magda.

"I don't know at all," said Barbara impatiently, "except that there aren't any more in this house. And the lawyer person only looks over his spectacles and says that he is not permitted, by the terms of the will, to divulge to me their names or numbers."

"Sounds like a regiment!" grunted Magda, who was making excellent smoke-rings. "How do you stand as regards money if one of the other troops brings off these matrimonial stakes?"

"Oh, he left me plenty," said Barbara. "But, you see, the lawyer says that there is such heaps over! And money is so useful, even if one has to have a husband at the same time."

"Yes, I see," said Magda thoughtfully. "Besides, it's not sporting to throw up the sponge. Surely you can raise a man friend from somewhere who might do?"

"My dear Magda, I came out of the convent only a month ago, and I've been nursing my poor odd, old guardian all that time. It's no use my proposing to the convent gardener, because he is already married, and the doctor is bald and has red eyebrows, which makes him quite out of the question. I don't know any other men—yet."

"Of course," began Magda, with some reluctance, "I might bring along Bobbie or Harold."

"No!" cried Barbara, with considerable agitation. "If I am going to marry anyone at all, it must be a total stranger. Then he must disappear for ever the moment the marriage certificate has been signed. And it would have to be somebody very discreet. One can tell Bobbie isn't that by his socks."

Magda disposed of the remains of her cigarette and began putting on her gloves.

"Then you will have to advertise," she said decidedly. "It's the only way."

Barbara's eyes widened in horror. "Think of the interviews!" she cried. "Oh, I couldn't!"

"I could fix all that part for you," said Magda. "All that you would have to do would be the marrying. Here comes your aunt. Does she know about the will?"

"No," said Barbara quickly, as the lady in question entered with her Pomeranian and her knitting. "She's one of the 'not to be divulged to '-ers'!"

"Good-bye," said Magda. "See you in the morning."

Barbara's parents had been able to provide her with only one aunt between them, and this lady was of such a disposition that before their death they had arranged that

the guardianship of their only child should fall to Randolf Baker, a rich but eccentric friend of theirs. This had annoyed Miss Hunchester very considerably at the time, and it was not without many allusions to the ill-advisedness of the arrangement that she had consented to play the *rôle* of chaperon to her pretty niece after the death of her guardian.

"Now," said that lady, as soon as Magda had disappeared, "where's the Dog's cushion?" (The Pomeranian possessed no name, only a capital letter!) "No, my dear, not the blue one with the storks, because they make him so nervous. There, that's right! Now, what's that girl's name, and who is her father?"

Miss Hunchester was in the habit of shooting out this last remark much in the same way that pantomime clowns, some years ago, were continually inquiring after the health of their male parents. She went through life demanding knowledge of people's fathers before they were admitted within the sacred circle of her life, and the necessity of having the right kind of father was as important to gain admission to Miss Hunchester's society as the possession of the right kind of passport is to gain admission to Miss Hunchester's country.

Barbara, having given her aunt the desired information about Magda's father, relapsed into the contemplation of her own troubles, and Miss Hunchester was too much engaged with her knitting and the comfort of the Dog to object to her silence. In fact, silence on the part of anyone else but herself seemed to her to be a virtue and an assistance to the clear marshalling of her own thoughts, which the regrettable desire for conversation on the part of others was wont seriously to inconvenience.

II.

MAGDA was a young lady not given to allowing much grass to grow under her feet, and, having set her hand to such an enthralling task as that of providing a husband for her best friend, she wasted no time in unnecessary cogitation. Somebody had to be found at once before one of the other wards could get married first and win the fortune, and the only way that Magda could see of providing a discreet husband such as her friend desired would be by discreet advertisement and judicious selection. That she was capable of providing herself both these necessities she was convinced. Therefore, when she presented herself to Barbara on the next morning, she immediately brought forth her proposed advertisement.

"To start with," she enunciated, "you can't say anything about the fortune, or you will have every man in the country answering you. Secondly, you must get the kind of person whom you don't mind being seen walking into church with. It won't do to put 'must be a gentleman,' because everyone is a gentleman nowadays, unless he happens to be a murderer. Therefore you have to be more explicit. Now, what about insisting upon all applicants being either an architect or a lawyer? I don't know about an architect, but a lawyer is made a gentleman by Act of Parliament, which ought to be about the most conclusive proof possible."

"I've never seen an architect," said Barbara thoughtfully; "I always thought that they were fabulous monsters. The only lawyer that I know wears whiskers and stiff cuffs."

"All right," said Magda magnanimously. "Then we'll have a barrister instead. They wear white wigs in business hours, and look rather sweet. Now, how is this? 'Young lady of twenty-one desires to make the acquaintance of a man, with the object of immediate matrimony. Must be an architect or a barrister. Apply Box, etc.'"

"I don't think that I quite like it," said Barbara. "It sounds a little bold."

Magda folded up her advertisement with decision. "Nonsense!" she said, sticking down the envelope. "One must be bold nowadays. Now I'll go and post it."

The next day or so seemed to pass very slowly, but the morning came at length when Barbara found herself face to face with her advertisement in the personal column of a mighty daily newspaper. It looked so terrifying that she locked herself in her bedroom and telephoned immediately for Magda. Then commenced a period of anxious waiting. The answers were to be forwarded to Magda; but whether the architects and barristers of the country were too busy to get married, or whether these gentlemen preferred to select their wives without help from the personal columns of the daily press, I do not know, but in answer to her advertisement Magda received but three replies.

One answer was from a facetious window-cleaner, another from a philanthropic architect, enclosing the address of a home for destitute young women, and the third—— It was the third answer that sent Magda, flushed and excited, to tell Barbara that she

had arranged an interview with somebody whom she considered decidedly promising.

Meanwhile in another house in the same city agitation reigned supreme. In a comfortable flat, from the depths of an enormous armchair, a young man was holding forth spiritedly, aided with inspiration from a glass of whisky and soda on the table beside him, on his misfortunes. Opposite him another youth, distinctly more cheerful, reclined listening on a cushioned sofa.

"Then all that you have got to do is to find a suitable girl, pull your socks up, and propose to her," he said, as he lit a cigarette cheerfully. "My dear Philip, I can't see anything very agitating in that. Seems to me a gift. There are heaps of nice girls about."

Philip scowled and poured himself out some more whisky. "You don't understand still," he complained bitterly. "Here am I, at the age of three-and-twenty, forced to choose between immediate marriage and the loss of a topping fortune. Suppose that your guardian had left a fortune to the first of his wards to wave his marriage certificate at some fat-headed lawyer, you wouldn't sit there grinning and smoking those confounded Turkish cigarettes!"

"How many wards has he got?" asked Tony, flicking away his cigarette ash.

"I don't know," said Philip. "Hundreds, perhaps. You know I never saw my guardian. Heaven knows where he kept himself. He must have been barmy. Anyway, I don't know a girl that I would care to marry. I won't marry just anyone!"

"Suppose," suggested Tony, who was gazing idly at a newspaper as he spoke, "suppose that I interested myself in your case and discovered for you the ideal girl—I might, you know; I've excellent taste in girls—will you carry on and do the deed then? You're too shy to run the show yourself."

Philip yawned dismally. "Trot out the ideal wife," he said, "and I'll enter all right for the Baker Handicap."

Tony's attention was suddenly attracted by something on the front page of his newspaper. "My dear old thing," he cried, "here's the very maiden! Listen! 'Young lady, twenty-one, wishes to make the acquaintance of a young man, with a view to immediate matrimony. Must be an architect or a barrister. Apply, etc.' What more do you want? Young—possibly beautiful—otherwise she would never be so really keen on an architect. Immediate matrimony! My dear Philip, the absolute IT!"

"If your knowledge of human nature permits you to suppose that an ideal girl advertises for a husband in a morning paper, you are obviously a way out, and your head wants relining," Philip remarked, with as much sarcasm as he could secure. "Besides, I'm not an architect, and I never interview strange women."

"Philip," said Tony solemnly, "I will investigate, and if I find her suitable, you shall be an architect or anything else that she may happen to have a hankering after. What does it matter as long as you get the fortune?"

Philip grunted.

So it came about, a few days afterwards, that a well-dressed young man was shown into Miss Magda Harvey's presence, and Tony was quite under the impression that he saw before him the writer of the advertisement who was apparently so anxious to marry a barrister or an architect. Having seen her, he came to the conclusion that members of the aforesaid professions were lucky devils to have obtained such preference.

Magda, equally sure that here was the man who wished to marry Barbara, began to wonder if it would be worth while putting in an advertisement for a barrister or an architect for herself.

"I have come," said Tony, slightly agitated, "in answer to the advertisement."

"You have come," repeated Magda, unconsciously imitating the frog footman in "Alice in Wonderland" in her nervousness, "in answer to the advertisement!"

"Yes," said Tony.

Then they both laughed.

"Don't you think," said Tony, "that before we start—er—business, we might go out and get a bag of tea together somewhere, just to get the hang of each other a bit first?"

Magda considered. Really the architect was a very pleasant person. "That's a very good idea," she said. "There are a lot of things that we must find out about each other, and we may just as well start by discovering how many lumps of sugar we take in our tea!"

So, while Barbara sat with clenched hands, intermingling affirmatives and negatives with her aunt's conversation, her mind fixed on the interview that she knew was taking place, and while Philip sat fiddling with his hair, and wondering what had kept Tony

so long at the appointment, the two plenipotentiaries sat till late at a table for two in a fashionable tea-shop, and enjoyed themselves enormously. And they forgot entirely the troubles of their more retiring principals.

"I think," said Tony, as they parted, "that we have found out a good bit about each other by now; but if you could manage a *matinée* to-morrow or the day after, we shall know each other sufficiently well to begin talking business"

Magda nodded solemnly. "I expect that you are right," she said. "Anyway, we will try."

These two ambassadors then returned to their anxiously awaiting friends and lied solemnly about the necessity of another meeting of inspection before they would finally commit themselves as to the suitability of their separate discoveries.

So Philip and Barbara had perforce to await a further report on their matrimonial applicants at the end of the next day.

As Tony proved to be an excellent *matinée* chooser, the next afternoon was a great success. Both were much too busy enjoying themselves to have time or inclination to arrange each other's marriage to somebody else. At the same time, Magda's explanation to Barbara concerning yet more investigation on the following day was received as coldly by that young lady as Tony's halting efforts to explain the necessity for the same meeting were accepted by a sceptical Philip. And just as Tony had an uncomfortable feeling that the last thing that he wished to do was to hand over his discovery as a bride to Philip, so Magda found herself equally undesirous of passing Tony on to Barbara. So that, when they met for tea on the third day, they were both feeling depressed and unhappy. However, Tony was determined to play the game with Philip, and Magda was equally determined not to let down Barbara.

For some minutes they skirmished conversationally for an opening. At last Tony emptied his tea-cup, filled his plate with an enormous chocolate *meringue*, and started off.

"You know," he said, "we've had an awfully good time lately, haven't we?"

Magda nodded emphatic agreement to this declaration.

"At the same time," went on Tony, "I suppose that we ought to have a talk about that advertisement."

Magda sighed regretfully. "I suppose we ought," she agreed.

"First of all," continued Tony, churning his *meringue* to pieces in his agitation, "the man for whom I am acting is very lucky."

"The man for whom you are acting?" repeated Magda. "Whatever do you mean?"

Tony plunged desperately. "Well, you see," he said, "he's a bit nervous of interviewing people, and so I did it for him. The poor devil's got to get married right away, or he will lose no end of money. Such a decent chap. You'll like him no end," he added dismally.

"This is very odd," began Magda thoughtfully, but cheerfully. "Aren't you the man himself who wants to marry the girl that I am fixing things up for?"

This time Tony did the gasping. "*You* fixing things up!" he cried. "Then are you running the show for somebody else, too?"

"You see, Barbara hasn't been out of the convent very long," explained Magda, "and convent people are so dreadfully unsophisticated."

Tony pushed his chair back and gazed ecstatically at the ceiling. "Thank all the little heavens!" he muttered. "What a bit of luck!"

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Magda, "but I think that we ought to arrange a meeting between Barbara and whatever your friend's name is."

But Tony was gazing at her in such a manner that, as they were in a very public tea-room, Magda thought that she had better start getting on her gloves and remembering how many cakes she had eaten.

"Meetings!" echoed Tony. "Oh, yes, quantities! Thousands, if you like! But I'm so glad that you don't want to marry Philip that I am not quite sure what I'm saying. But I want to get married, too. Don't you think that it would be rather a good idea, Magda, if you could——"

Magda arranged her veil with steady hands. "If they are apparently both so nervous," she said, "it might help them if we sort of led off first. Let's go and find Barbara."

A dazed and happy Tony, leaving three half-crowns on the table for an astonished waitress, paid his bill at the desk and followed Magda out of the tea-shop.

While Tony and Magda had been having such an interesting time together, Philip

and Barbara, in their respective abodes, had been bored to tears.

Now, perhaps Fate, tired of the inefficient dilatoriness of their two friends, decided to take a hand in their affairs herself. Anyway, Philip, chancing to observe on the mantelpiece a white-carded invitation to a picture show of a famous artist for that very afternoon, determined to attend the same. And Barbara, protesting, was led to the same entertainment by her aunt.

Then, choosing a buxom lady with three chins and a mania for introductions as her intermediary, Fate watched the meeting of Mr. Philip Colver and Miss Barbara Sindon, saw them seated in conversation on a brown plush sofa, and departed to arrange the fall of a famous Cabinet minister.

As soon as Philip and Barbara found themselves facing each other in conversation on that brown plush sofa, exactly the same thought occurred to them both: "Now, if I had only been left alone, here is the kind of person that I would have liked to marry!" And as they discussed the weather, the pictures, and the need for tea, this thought became stronger and stronger until Philip could contain himself no longer.



"Philip and Barbara found themselves facing each other in conversation on that brown plush sofa."

"I think," stammered Philip, "that, if you will excuse me, I had better leave you. The fact is that, if I remain another minute, I know that I shall propose to you! You see, you are too adorable!"

So impregnated with the idea of marriage had Barbara's mind become during the last few days, that she saw nothing strange in this sudden avowal, but accepted the proposal that followed as quickly as a few minutes ago she had accepted her tea.

"At the same time I ought to tell you," she announced, "that if I get married before my late guardian's other wards, I inherit his fortune."

Philip started. "That is odd," he said, "but it is exactly how I am placed, too. My old guardian was called Baker."

Barbara dropped a teaspoon, and her eyes opened so wide that a passing archdeacon thought for a moment that they were about to drop out.

"That's very convenient," she said. "Then we were both wards of the same man. If we are quick about getting married, we'll probably get the fortune. Hullo, there's Magda coming!"

"I don't care a dash about the fortune," said Philip ardently, "as long as I have got you!" Which was just as well, as it turned out, for when they reached their homes they both found a letter from the lawyer, intimating that he also was one of Mr. Baker's three wards, and enclosing his marriage certificate with the date of the day before!

"Never mind," comforted Magda thoughtfully. "Tony and I are getting married without a fortune, so I don't see why you shouldn't. Besides, I expect that the *padre* man will marry us all cheaper as it's a double wedding!"

PIERRETTE

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. FLEMING WILLIAMS

MY front tyre began to flatten at the fourth or fifth application of the gold safety-pin which I had withdrawn from my soft collar. To destroy or do wanton damage, however necessary, is bad for the ego. I felt as guilty as if I were performing the lantern-light obsequies of a neighbour's cat—shot while out on patrol—in a secluded corner of a garden at dead of night. But I had decided upon a course of action, and the shade of Lady Macbeth could not but have admired my resolution. Here, properly handled, was an opportunity in a thousand to make acquaintance with Pierrette.

I did not even know her real name, but I was sworn to know her. To myself I called her Pierrette for a reason I am loth to explain; but it is a poor confession that withholds anything of the truth.

The object of my first love affair, at the tender age of five or six, had been a lady in a picture—a dancing Pierrette who laughed down at me from the nursery wall. She was in one of those coloured plates given away with Christmas numbers, the very smell of which reminded one delightfully of Christmas. My nurse, who had a catholic taste in mural decorations, had hung her there between a picture of Alfred burning the cakes and an illuminated certificate which announced that she, Emily Chubb, had been enrolled a member of the Guild of Good Young People.

For me there was no other picture in the nursery but Pierrette. I loved the bright, dark eyes, the red, provocative, smiling lips of her—loved her as if she had been a living thing. I can see that picture now, the white, slim, gracious form with the black pompoms standing out in bold relief, while all other memories of that period are vague as if a mist had shrouded them.

Man in his loves is faithful—to a type. As I grew older and found myself looking longer than usual into certain pairs of eyes, they were always eyes which reminded me of Pierrette's. Oh, little ladies, dear ladies, who have leased my heart for an hour or a day or even a month, even though there be a score of you, I have been a true and faithful lover. I have been true to my first love, a coloured print which once hung on a wall in a little boy's nursery.

But I have introduced myself in the act of puncturing my bicycle tyre, and what, I shall be asked, has that to do with Pierrette, or my childhood, or any old thing but a simple act of insanity? I am coming to that.

My name is Charles Sleave-Galton, and I have some small reputation as a junior at the Bar, and a much larger reputation as a student of trout. Even my considerable modesty cannot prevent me from mentioning that I am supposed to know more about how to breed, catch, cook, and eat trout than any other man in England.

It was the month of wallflowers and muslin blouses—and Mayflies, so what more natural place to find me than the valley of the Min? I had rented two miles of the south bank of that delectable stream, and twenty-odd brace of browns and rainbows had already good cause to be sorry for it. But something had happened to drive me from the water to the road, and that something was a vision of my Pierrette. It was my Pierrette come to life out of the picture, dressed in the cool colours of early summer and riding a bicycle. I had seen her half a dozen times, the last but three or four minutes since.

She had passed me on the road, and I—well, I had happened to be looking round and had seen her turn through an open white gate into a drive which doubtless led to some house beyond the screen of trees. I did not know who lived there. I knew not a soul in the Min valley. But here, for a man of resource, was a first-class opportunity of meeting Pierrette. I mean to say that if one were so unfortunate as to have a puncture, he might with perfect propriety wheel his machine to the house and ask for

the loan of a mending outfit. And since it was about tea-time and a hot afternoon, there was an even chance that one might be offered certain small hospitalities. It was more than likely that the people would know my name. It was a household word in every country house within twelve miles of a trout-stream. And if Pierrette did not live there, she would certainly be there to tea, and—wonderful flight of fancy!—one might even ride home with her afterwards.

So, congratulating myself on my low cunning, I turned back, wheeling my incapacitated bicycle, and went up the winding drive between the rhododendron bushes. A hundred yards or so brought me out of the shade of trees and into a pleasaunce of flowers and lawns with a white house beyond. My approving gaze took in two tennis courts freshly marked. Grouped under a great cedar tree on one of the lawns was a party, consisting mostly of young people armed with tennis rackets. Among them, however, was a perfectly good bishop, complete with apron and leggings.

My own one surviving maternal uncle is the Bishop of Barnborough. Bishops are like bookmakers in that they all know each other. I knew that, once this particular bishop knew who I was, I could gain admission into that charmed circle where Pierrette moved. But how to let him know, was the problem. You can't shout out to a bishop across somebody else's lawn: "Hi, you, do you know my Uncle Edward?"

I caught sight of Pierrette sitting close to an unfolded table, a strategic position enabling her to command the most attractive cakes. I noted with great approval a maid carrying a tray on which a silver tea-pot shone like an oriflamme. The whole situation seemed rich in promise.

The maid vanished to mysterious regions at the back of the house to meet me at the front door. I said:

"Will you present my compliments and apologies to your master or mistress, and say that I have just had a bad puncture, and as I seem to be a long way from a shop where I could get it mended, I have ventured to call and ask if they could lend me some solution and a scrap of rubber."

That was rather a long message for a maid. I could scarcely hope that she would get it right.

"Yes, sir," she said. "What name shall I say?"

"Oh, say Mr. Sleave-Galton, or—er—here is my card."

I never entrust my name to servants unless I can help it. They never get it right. I have heard myself referred to as Mr. Slieve Gallion, which was the name of a horse. Generally there is a card or two to be found in my cigarette case. I pulled one out and gave it to her. She placed it on a salver and crossed the lawn with it.

The breeze must have been blowing from them to me, and in any case sound travels well over grass. I heard a burst of merriment not intended for my ears, and a dreadful sense of something having gone amiss struck at my heart. Then the bishop spoke, and I heard every word.

"It seems," he said, "that those who follow the most sombre avocations become gay in mind and attire when upon holiday. We can picture—can we not?—the hangman disporting himself on the seashore, and helping his little children to build castles out of sand."

He said this in the tone in which the mighty are wont to refer to their inferiors. That he was speaking of me there could be no doubt. But what did he mean? Even strange, misguided people who took no interest in trout could hardly regard the study of them as a sombre vocation. There was nothing on my card to denote that I was wedded to the law, a sombre calling, if you like. It gave merely the name of a club in which earls and viscounts can be heard snoring in the silence room any afternoon of the week, just like ordinary human beings. Why, then, had he spoken thus, and in that tone of irritating patronage?

The maid returned to me, biting her lip.

"If you will come into the stable yard," she said, "I think we can find something for you."

I followed her, sad and mystified, wheeling the bicycle. Two enormous dogs on chains which I thought criminally long made the air hideous on my approach, and, having shown every symptom of tearing me to pieces, violently agitated their tails as who would say: "Don't you worry, old lad. *You're* all right. It's awful rot, of course, but we're kept here to make this beastly row."

But I took my stand, when the maid left me, on No Dog's Land, a very small strip of ground which neither animal was quite able to reach.

I got my cup of tea. Oh, yes; but no master or mistress came up to chat with me, to commiserate with me on my suppoesd misfortune, and, finding themselves to be

entertaining an angel unawares, bear me away to the group under the tree. A menial of the groom species brought it in a cup about the size of a small foot-bath. He addressed me as "chum."

In the fell clutch of circumstance I neither winced nor cried aloud. Something had gone wrong somewhere. Perhaps the maid had soiled my card and had tried to remember my name, so that I was confused with some other and less worthy person.

If there is one job which I hate more than all others, it is that of mending punctures. I invariably spread solution all over myself, and generally fail to get the patch to stick. The groom brought me a luxurious cycle repair outfit, but made no offer to do the job for me. After his disrespectful greeting I was in no mind to ask his assistance. He lounged luxuriously by me, smoking a cigarette, and favoured me with a conversation which grew more and more ghoulish.

"I'm goin' ter be cremated," he announced.

I thought he was a good judge, and hoped that it would be soon.

"On a 'oliday, I s'pose?" he queried.

I did not answer.

"Good job you can afford it," he continued thoughtfully. "I often wonder 'ow you manage, though, in your line o' business. Suppose the bereaved don't pay up, 'ow do you manage then? You can't very well County Court 'em. It 'ud seem so 'eartless-like."

I did not answer. He might as well have been talking Dutch to me. I went on loosening the outer cover. Through the act of my own hand this thing had come upon me.

"I've 'eard you was quite jolly fellers when you was orf duty," the groom continued rather aggrievedly. "You don't seem fond of talking, though. 'Ere, what shape tombstone would you think most suitable for a aunt?"

"You've a cheerful taste in conversation, my man," I said.

"I'm not your man yet," he rejoined, "but I s'pose I'll belong to one of you fellers one of these days. Talkin' o' my Aunt Matilda, you ought to have seen 'er before we buried 'er. You never seen such a lovely corpse. Done your 'eart good, straight it would."

I must practise the look I gave him, so, when all else fails, I may perhaps make an honest living on the music-halls as Basilico, the Male Medusa. He tried to preserve some show of dignity by edging slowly away, whistling ostentatiously. But he went, and I was not concerned with the manner of his going.

Sadly I mended the punctures, wondering the while at this strange treatment from a servant. Had Pierrette whispered to her hostess that, when she had seen me a short while before, my tyres were unpunctured, and that I had doubtless followed her with this lame excuse? Hardly. And even if that were so, they would scarcely send a stableman to be rude to me. Most women can be ruder than their servants, if they so desire. Besides, such a form of rebuke would have been involved, ill-bred, pointless, altogether unlikely. No, there was some ghastly mistake somewhere.

The right track eluded my mind until some twenty minutes later, when I was cycling slowly and sadly towards my habitation. Then, full of strange oaths as the soldier in the Seven Stages of Man, I sprang off my machine and searched feverishly in my cigarette case.

It contained five cards, all of them mine. A card I had received from a solemn, grateful little man the day before was missing. He had begged a day's fishing of me, and given me his card, and I had placed it among mine, pending destruction, and had forgotten it. On it I had seen engraved the following dreadful legend: "Jno. Parkins, Undertaker." Beneath was his family or business motto: "Reverence a Speciality."

I sat down by the roadside and buried my face in my hands. I thought I was crying like a child until I heard myself laughing like a hyena. Hysteria is a dreadful thing, my brothers.

II.

HANDS in pockets, I stepped out into the early twilight of the perfect evening, and paced the thirty yards of road between the inn and the bridge. In the middle of the bridge I halted and leaned over the parapet, and fell to watching the rush of clear water through the central arch, rippling and eddying over the sandy shallows where trout and grayling were at play. Your true angler is never so sad but the sight of fish will distract him. The sight of a lordly two-pounder has kindled light in many a jaded eye.

All down the shining silver waterway, where the shadows of poplars lay like black bars between bank and bank, the fish were

rising. Clumsy juveniles made loud splashes, older and staider brethren removed their booty with hardly a ripple, and now and again came the authentic "glug" of a big fish rising.

But I had no heart to take rod in hand and whip the stream. Time was when I could leave all care behind me on the river bank, so that I was half-way to heaven when the winch sang and the rod bent. But now all the magic had gone out of the call of the river; it sounded faintly and fell on indifferent ears.

On my return to the inn that afternoon, mortified and wounded in spirit, I had not sought consolation and forgetfulness in my old haunts. Even the thought of Adrian and Gertrude, two three-pounders who were still suspected of the Mayfly habit, could not lure me to the water's edge. Instead, I sat at my bedroom window and moped like a boy. That window commanded a view of the road along which Pierrette must ride when she returned from the house whither I had followed her. She was not yet come, and so I had wandered out to the bridge which she must cross.

What I had in mind it would be hard to say. I could hardly shout to her as she passed: "I say, it's all a mistake. I'm not an undertaker." I had about as much chance of making her acquaintance now as a patent fire-lighter has of avoiding ignition in a blazing building. And even if the chance came, I should for ever represent a good joke in her eyes. Love often ends in ridicule, but it seldom begins that way. When she thought of me, she would not wonder, after the approved fashion, what magic quickened her heart—she would simply explode in laughter. A girl with that shape of mouth laughed all too readily.

Part of the trouble was that I, too, could see the funny side of the situation. It is a dreadful thing to have to laugh when one's heart is like the weight of an old clock. So I leaned over the bridge, smiling wryly at the water and the rising fish, while the peace and beauty of the evening seemed to mock me.

Just as if I had arranged a meeting with her, I fell to asking myself what had become of her. Was there an alternative route by which she could return home? She could hardly be staying to dinner at that hateful house. Even the least conventional would scarcely sit down to meat with a bishop in the same costume which had done duty on the tennis courts.

And suddenly, just as I had resigned hope of seeing her, she came in sight around a bend of the road beyond the inn. I transferred my gaze immediately to the water, and, leaning over the bar of the bridge, posed as unaware of there being another soul in sight. I might have served a painter just then to depict Manly Dejection. But my heart beat high, for she was walking and wheeling her machine. This argued some small mishap, the relenting of the gods; for I might now with propriety beg leave to help her.

When she drew near, I permitted myself to hear her footfalls on the road, and looked up with a start of surprise which could hardly have been done better on the stage. The back tyre of her machine was as flat as the singing of the village choir. I tried hard to conceal my satisfaction. As she drew level with me, I bowed and addressed her in a voice which seemed to belong to somebody else,

"Excuse me, I see you have had a puncture. If you have far to go . . . I mean, if you will allow me to mend it . . ."

I wanted to say too much at once, and came stammering to a halt. Pierrette's colour rose half a tone higher. Her eyes were shy, but I saw her bite at her under-lip as if to break a smile.

"It's very good of you," she said in a high, nervous tone. "Such a nuisance to have punctures. But really, you know, I've only two miles to go."

She spoke of two miles as if they were a hundred yards.

"I've a repairing outfit at the inn," I said. "It won't take more than five minutes, if you will allow me. I love mending punctures."

The smile which she was striving to keep under control peeped out of her eyes. She saw that I had seen it, and, giving up the struggle, let it spread to her lips.

"Really," she said. "And you've had a lot of practice, haven't you?"

I pretended to be dense, and then allowed light to dawn upon me.

"Ah, you are thinking of this afternoon. I had four punctures just after I saw you."

"Four!"

"Yes, one wouldn't have been enough, I mean," I added hastily, "I shouldn't have stopped for one small one. This—er—this one was the size of four. If you will excuse me for one minute, I'll go and fetch that repairing outfit."

She turned and proceeded to accompany

me towards the inn, I taking the bicycle from her. Something seemed to amuse her, and presently she laughed out.

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I must remember that I owe myself a shilling. I had a bet with myself that I should see you on this stretch of road."

"I'll wager the same sum," said I, "that you can't tell me why I was here. No, I won't let you guess. You'd lose. I knew you were going to have a puncture."

She looked almost startled, as if she had taken me seriously.

"They're in the air to-day," I went on. "Besides, I'm clairvoyant. Malkiel, my dear old spirit-control, told me about the fix you were in. Stout fellow, Malkiel. Always out scouting and bringing me bits of news. He didn't mention, though, if you beat the bishop."



"'I used to look forward to the day when I should be big enough to kiss her. I was wondering if I am.'"

"How?"

"At tennis, of course. I hope you did."

She laughed, and the ring of it was pure silver.

"The bishop only plays croquet," she said.

"Ah, the old habit formed during his first curacy! How they cling—habits, of course, not bishops. I had the makings of a first-class croquet player once, but I broke down in training. Athlete's heart, Pierrette"

I realised what I had called her, and bit too late at the last syllable. I saw her stiffen a little.

"I couldn't help it," I exclaimed, "and I can't say I'm sorry. You must have seen me stare at you—not rudely, I trust. The reason is that you've stepped straight out of a picture I used to know, a picture which hung in my nursery when I was a kid. You've done your hair a new way and changed your dress, but you're still Pierrette. It slipped out then, but I was going to tell you, anyhow. You see, I was very fond of that picture as a youngster."

She frowned and smiled, but the smile lasted longer.

"Then," she murmured, "that explains——"

"The four punctures I had this afternoon? Yes."

"I wasn't going to say that."

"But you knew?"

"I—I thought. But you shouldn't have——"

"Shouldn't have told you? Well, that's debatable. Most men wouldn't have told you so soon."

"I was going to say that you shouldn't have done it," said Pierrette severely.

"It didn't come off," I admitted. "But, Pierrette, consider, there was no other way."

I left her then to fetch the repairing outfit.

III.

A FEW yards past the bridge a haystack stood almost flush with the road. I wheeled the damaged machine there, while Pierrette kept step beside me.

"I don't think," she said, "that I ought to allow you to mend it for me, after what you've confessed."

"The bishop would tell you that penance is good for a sinner. Besides, I've done some already. Look at the way you all laughed at me under the tree! Besides, I had to endure the conversation of a groom who insisted on talking of graves and worms and epitaphs. It's taught me a lesson."

"I'm very glad."

"Yes; never to mix other people's cards up with mine."

She caught her breath in laughter and bent her head.

"So you've found out what you did!" she said in a voice at once muffled and shaken.

"Of course. Oh, Pierrette, I believe you knew all the time! Why didn't you tell them?"

"Of course I knew who you were," she said. "My father devours your treatises——"

"Call them troutises."

"We knew who you were. Nobody can stay here three days without their names being known. The Stendys—whom you visited this afternoon—don't count. One of them was in the San Francisco earthquake, and knew nothing about it until three days afterwards."

"Then you might have told the Stendys that I wasn't an under—— No, I can't say the beastly word."

She laughed provocatively, just as the Pierrette in the picture would have laughed.

"I? Why should I? I guessed what brought you there. I was very angry with you. It was so—so brazen."

"And," I continued, "you needn't have jeered when that card came along. Yes, Pierrette, I heard *you* laughing."

There was no sign of repentance, no consciousness of sin. She laughed the more.

"Oh, it was priceless! Imagine a dozen people, mostly frivolous, sitting down to tea, and an undertaker's card being presented. I wouldn't have spoilt the joke for worlds!"

I had turned the bicycle upside down and was struggling with two tyre-levers. I paused to shake my head solemnly at a memory.

"I always used to think," said I, "that the Pierrette in my old picture had a perverted sense of humour."

"Had she? Do tell me about her."

I had intended to, and I needed no second asking. While I botched my work as a mechanic, I went back on a train of memory to the days when uncles were a source of half-crowns, and every day-dream of the future seemed to stand a sporting chance.

"She hung on the nursery wall, and I loved her passing well. When I was seven or eight, she was superseded by a barefooted Oriental lady hugging a pitcher on a tiled floor, and I was desolated. That's the beginning and the end. I haven't forgotten her; I think I've been looking for her all my life. As a kid I used to pretend that there was somebody in the world just like her. There wasn't at the time, but the stars were moving to make your horoscope. I can see her in you in every turn and movement. She was my first love and my last. I used to say 'Good night' and 'Good morning' to her. She hung high on the wall, and I used to look forward to the day when I should be big enough to kiss her. You must please laugh at me, Pierrette. *She* would have laughed."

Obligingly she laughed, but the sound lacked spontaneity.

"Am I so like her, then?" she asked in a low voice.

"You are she," I said. "Didn't you have a funny dream that you were a picture of a Pierrette, standing upright on your little toes, with your arms outflung, and the most provoking smile on your lips? And don't you remember, in that dream, the ghost of a little boy yearning up to you on tiptoe, begging you with his eyes to step down to him?"

Her smiling was only half mocking.

"I don't remember dreaming that," she said.

I was stumped for the moment. I had let my tongue run on, and suddenly it refused to go further. Luckily, the outer cover of the tyre came off just then, and I busied myself with pulling out the inner tube and pumping it up. It lolled fat and bladdery like a gorged snake, and I listened in vain for the hiss of escaping air.

"You've been very quiet—for you," said Pierrette presently.

"I have been wondering," I said.

"Wondering what?"

"I've told you that when I was a little boy, and my Pierrette hung high on the wall, I used to look forward to the day when I should be big enough to kiss her. I was wondering if I am big enough now."

She sat in a niche in the stack, dangling her heels a few inches above the ground. A slice taken from the stack had made a chair for her. I knelt by the upturned bicycle below her, looking up. She did not flinch from my gaze.

"You've grown too big, I think," she said.

"How so, Pierrette?"

"You know too much now. Your Pierrette in the picture seemed perfect to you once. Had she come to life and kissed you once, you would have thought nothing but of your happiness. Let the same happen now, and you would call her cheaply won. Your heart, which knows too much, would cry 'Minx!' at her."

"No, no!" I cried.

"Yes, yes," she answered, very cool and wise. "Think, Little Boy, of the critical faculties you have developed since those days. Would your ideal Pierrette have joined that laughter against you this afternoon and let you pass for an undertaker?"

"Of course she would. She was a mocking baggage."

"And would she be here with you now, letting you talk to her like this? Oh, we both know that I should have snubbed you and wheeled my bicycle home. Can you forgive my not having done that, Little Boy?"

"Oh, dash it all," I burst out, "you do know who I am! Why didn't your father come and call? . . . I say, really, you know, I can't find any puncture in this tyre."

The conversation had drifted away from where I would have had it, and the nature of my task gave me a chance of diverting its course. Next moment I was inwardly cursing myself for a fool. If the tyre stayed up, there was nothing to prevent her from riding straightaway on it. I pinched the inner tube. There seemed as much air in it as ever.

"This afternoon," she said, "you deliberately punctured your own tyre so that you might get to know me. What would you think of a woman who would do such a thing to make acquaintance with a man?"

"A woman wouldn't," said I.

"Quite right. A woman wouldn't. Women are more economical, and they wouldn't damage their tyres. A woman would let the air out by the simple process of removing the valve."

Some moments elapsed before I realised what she had told me.

"Heavens!" I exclaimed. "I wondered why that tyre hadn't gone down!"

I turned towards her, but she held me where I was with a smile full of sadness and wisdom.

"You see?" she said. "You asked to know me; I took this means to give you what you asked. You can't forgive that. You're too big and wise now to forgive a girl for meeting you half-way. I've taught you a lesson, Little-Boy-Who-Loved-a-Picture. Remember it, and forget me."

But I went to her and dropped at her feet by the stack among the fragrant hay. A little neatly-gloved hand hung limp above me, and I drew it down. It just reached my lips.

"I've grown bigger than I was," I said. "See, I can reach your hand already. I shall grow bigger yet, Pierrette."

THE ANCHOR

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "Minnows and Tritons," "Both Sides of the Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

EVERY box at Lloyd's is fitted like every other box, and always has been, except that which harbours Frederick Perlay, where for many years was screwed to the outside corner of the mahogany table a metal frame against which leant a brass model of the Perlay anchor. The defect hitherto inherent in anchors, that their efficiency varies with varying anchorages, was overcome in this. The Perlay anchor held upon any bottom. Wherever it stuck, arms, released by a powerful spring, shot out, and their india-rubber cup terminals attached themselves like suckers. Once let down, the anchor could neither be dragged by hurricane nor raised by windlass. Perlay hotly denied the latter, attributing his own inability to pull up his model to the smoothness of the floor. The inequalities of surface of any natural anchorage, he maintained, would furnish just the give to enable the anchor to be raised without affecting its immunity from dragging. It may be so—the Perlay anchor has never been given a trial—but it was the general opinion at Lloyd's (and it is ours also) that a ship equipped with the Perlay anchor would have to remain for ever at her first anchorage.

Perlay's notion in having the model on the desk was to introduce his invention to shipowners through their relatives. Lloyd's is stiff with sons and nephews of shipowners. Never was the old underwriter so happy as when, having secured the attention of the scion of some famous line, he prepared to cast anchor. Optimism radiated through his double spectacles as he held the brass model aloft. Having made his cast, he would invite—with a twinkle in his restless, cavernous eyes—the young man to raise the anchor. He never could. Once a bull-necked youth broke the brass chain, but to release the anchor by a straight pull wasn't possible.

"Now, sir, let me see you work the oracle." Why would curious youths always bring on the anti-climax by demanding this? Perlay tried to bundle them away while success was at the zenith, but rarely could. On his hands and knees in the dust, digging beneath each sucker with his penknife, he became his old morose, liverish self again. At such moments he realised that the lack of proper means for releasing his anchor was a drawback, and the possibility that the onlooker might suggest some method gave him patience. The same thought helped him to endure the insurance brokers who made his model their favourite toy. It was only those whose cases bulged with gilt-edged risks who could pick up Perlay's anchor openly, but many a surreptitious cast was made by clerks hurrying by. In the floor-grovelling sequels to such clerical pleasantries the old underwriter's eyebrows worked murderously.

Despite these annoyances, however, he was almost heart-broken when officially told to disconnect his model; ostensibly because of the damage to the floor, which for a two-foot semicircle around his seat was ploughed up by his pocket-knife.

"That is a mere subterfuge, Mr. Saunders," he said to the official. "What do a few trifling gashes to the boards matter in comparison with the saving of life and property that would result from the adoption of my anchor? I shall obey this order, although I see in it the triumphant malice of my *vis-à-vis*, Robert Calder." His shot had hit the bull's-eye. The hand of Robert Calder was in this mandate.

Robert Calder and Perlay had waged relentless war against one another for twenty-five years. Before that they had been bosom friends. As boys they had been neighbours in a third-rate provincial town, and, both taking to marine insurance, they had always been associated. When Calder secured a seat opposite to his old school-

fellow, they had dined and wined together in celebration of the joyous event. This was forty years ago; for a quarter of a century now their juxtaposition had been tragic: each was a worse man for facing every day and all day one whom he hated.

A good deal of sympathy was felt for Perlay. He had faced his anchor so long and so hopefully that the sight of him working clumsily with a screw-driver to remove it had pathos. Calder, with incredible taste, sat chaffing him, not suspecting how many were aching to kick him—Calder, whose massive physique made petty spite unpardonable.

Perlay, perhaps, would have done the same if the positions had been reversed, but he was mere skin and bones, and obviously hag-ridden by nerves. One could forgive Perlay many offences against other people.

After this the bickerings in this box became a public scandal. Calder had always been careless how he encroached on the table territory of his neighbours. Perlay now drew a chalk line down the middle of the table, and would snatch up any book of Calder's that crossed this and rush off to impound it, the owner in furious pursuit. At times the two septuagenarians were almost at blows. Everyone was glad when a call to the underwriting chair of the Incidental Marine Insurance Co. removed Calder from Lloyd's.

For months the enemies did not meet. But the feud continued. Calder abused Perlay unsparingly to the brokers, who were now buzzing around the Incidental like flies on a carcase, while Perlay persistently forgave Calder, and hoped that he would escape the natural consequences of his incompetence. Meanwhile the Incidental had become the port of refuge of every insurance broker in distress. One day John Pritchard, who showed Perlay's account (like many another underwriter, Perlay was also an insurance broker), reported that he must return an insurance upon iron water-pipes all risks. No one would quote upon it except F.P.A.

"Have you been everywhere, John?"

"Everywhere except to the Incidental, and you won't let me go there."

"Do you think Mr. Calder would take this all risks?"

"I believe so, sir. He seems to be writing blindfold."

"Well. John, go to him, then. Beggars mustn't be choosers, and we simply can't let our customers slip."

Robert Calder stood upon his dignity. "You have kept away from me so long, young man, that it is evident you were acting on instructions. I cannot, therefore, open the account except through your principal."

When Mr. Perlay went round, he had to answer a number of questions about the insurance, which he could do easily, the assured being the corporation of a great colonial seaport, and the risk in every way well meant.

"Ninety shillings," said Calder firmly.

With a depressed nod, Perlay yielded to this extortion. To his amazement, the Incidental took the whole insurance.

The shipments were spread over six months, but the claims came in together. Not a shipment had escaped damage; altogether the particular average was more than ten per cent.

Young Lang, the junior, left the policies and documents with the Incidental's claim settler, but when he called for them a week later, he was referred to the underwriting room, where Calder, with the unreasoning fury of senility, browbeat him unmercifully.

"I have been deceived, defrauded! Your employer told me the pipes were all the same size, and, as the number was stated, I knew the value of each, and could infer roughly how big they were. It appears that the pipes are of all sizes, and that the very large ones alone have suffered. Nothing would have persuaded me knowingly to insure such monsters. Here, take the papers; do what you like with them."

Contemptuously he tossed the twenty policies and the statements into the air. They rained upon the carpet, where young Lang had the spirit to leave them. When the glass door closed on his not undignified exit, the assembled brokers and Calder's own assistants sat gaping at the horrid sight. In the insurance world a policy is sacred, and here were policies kicking around like refuse. The deputy underwriter, white of face, collected and laid them reverently in a wicker basket that stood on his own desk.

Meanwhile Pritchard was alone in the office, posting the brokerage voyage book, which was in no way singular, except in having a column on the extreme right for remarks. Perlay alone had ever written in this column, and since he had ceased showing risks, it had fallen into desuetude. Indeed, the sole remark was against the

entry of the iron water-pipe insurance. Stretching across the desk for a ruler, Pritchard capsized the red-ink bottle, and a crimson river ran in spate down the right-hand column. In this crisis the brokerage clerk did everything, dear reader, that you would have done, "and then some." The "some" was the applying to ink erasure the famous heat formula for removing grease from cloth clothes. He followed it to the letter, covering the incarnadined page with clean blotting-paper, and waving over it a red-hot poker. No ink, obedient to his incantations, rose into the blotting-paper, which presently burst into flames. He extinguished them promptly with the junior's office coat, and took stock of the situation. Red as ever, the remarks column now testified to the further crime of arson. But fire had bitten a good twenty pages deeper than flood, the damage extending from the foot of each about two-thirds up. Pritchard cut out the scorched paper, making twenty equal rectangles, and surrounded these spaces with double-lined Oxford borders of incredible accuracy. He had just completed them when his employer entered.

"John, please hand me the voyage book."

Pritchard pushed it across the desk confidently.

Mr. Perlay turned over the mutilated pages, but noticed nothing amiss. The Oxford borders were oppressively orthodox: the rectangular cuts reeked of rectitude.

"Come here, John, and read my remark."

This, written the very day the iron pipe insurance had been effected, recorded that Mr. Calder, demanding explicit assurance that the pipes should be nested (i.e., the smaller packed inside the larger), Mr. Perlay gave this, having been told verbally by the assured's agent that nesting was being adopted.

"And in the teeth of that, Calder can declare that I said the pipes were all of one size!"

Later the assured's solicitor examined the entry, accepting the rectangular cuts and the Oxford borders of the adjacent pages as parts of a wise design. Could they, however, stand the fierce light of Court, and, if the truth came out, would the delinquent escape dismissal? Pritchard thought not, but before the case came on—it was delayed by the Long Vacation—he had been sacked for the following reason.

A policy went astray in the post. When eventually it was found in the Dead Letter Office, the envelope showed, instead of the proper direction, "George Birdwood, Esq., Shipowner, 6, Marine Parade, St. Heliers, Guernsey," the absurd finish "Marine Parade, E.C." The culprit was Walter Lang. Perlay abused him up hill and down dale, only to realise, when Birdwood's character sketch of himself arrived, how much he had left unsaid. To rectify this, he was for ever presenting supplementary estimates of the lad, wherein "Marine Parade, E.C.," was sure of honourable mention. Within a month Briggs, affected by what had become an inevitable association of ideas, dispatched another of Birdwood's policies misdirected in the same way. This time Perlay left nothing unsaid—at least, he thought not—but there were certain underlined phrases in Birdwood's bilingual remonstrance that he could not translate and Pritchard would not, feeling that the Channel Islander's English insults should satisfy anyone.

After this Perlay used "Marine Parade, E.C.," as a synonym for carelessness of any kind, until it became a *cliché*, and a clerk having written Marine Parade could avoid the continuation "E.C." only by painful effort. It became a nightmare literally. The staff wrote Marine Parade, E.C., in their sleep, and awoke in a perspiration.

And then a third policy went a-roaming. This time Birdwood cabled insults, and deducted the cost from his monthly account. When the policy was returned by the Dead Letter Office, Pritchard proved to have been the misdirector. The same blunder, of course. Feeling that something must be done to stay the E.C. epidemic, Perlay gave his brokerage clerk a month's notice, and announced both to clerks and client that henceforth all St. Heliers correspondence would be addressed by himself.

"I have had enough," he screamed, "of Marine Parade, E.C.!"

And, with the words upon his lips, he wrote them on the envelope in which he had placed the policy the Dead Letter Office had just returned. This time there was little delay. St. Martin's-le-Grand wrote "Try St. Heliers," and it was only the insurance broker's enclosed letter of apology that told Birdwood that the belated policy had been misdirected twice. Not having suffered from the last blunder, he replied in the greatest good humour, in one language, enclosing the foolish envelope, and begging Mr. Perlay to withdraw his threat of addressing future correspondence himself. This being his first effort, and quite mad, there was no guarantee that he would enjoy

the lucid intervals that made his clerks such charming correspondents.

Perlay had a mind to destroy this letter, which was mere raillery, but a punctilio restrained him, and, with a growl, he threw it across to the junior to be endorsed and filed. Lang performed these operations gravely, and then suddenly exploded like an overcharged siphon.

Pritchard saw something splendid in the refusal to suppress a letter, but then it was a pose of his to discover good in his employer. In the teeth of probability he had always asserted that he liked him. He did not break out even when he found that Perlay's having succumbed to the unescapable E.C. would not lead to a rescinding of the sentence upon himself.

Finding a new situation did not prove so easy as Master Pritchard had expected. He heard of one or two vacancies, but although his first interviews with the insurance brokers were encouraging, the positions went to rivals with less than his experience. The end of the month found him unplaced.

His first day of unemployment was a nightmare, broken in the evening by a letter from Mr. Walks, who, like Perlay, was both underwriter and broker; but upon how different a scale! Pritchard was asked to



"He had faced his anchor so long and so hopefully that the sight of him working clumsily with a screw-driver to remove it had pathos."

call the following morning to discuss the possibility of his showing the "Walks and Hunter" brokerage account, in succession to their Mr. Maggin, who was starting in business for himself. Pritchard interviewed Mr. Walks in the reading-room at Lloyd's.

"In showing me business," said the underwriter, "you have always been open and above-board, and I am therefore surprised that Mr. Perlay warns me not to believe everything you say. Has he justification for this?"

"None whatever, sir. Will you confront me with him?"

At that moment Mr. Perlay rushed by, *en route* for the Captains' Room and lunch.

"Mr. Perlay, Mr. Perlay, one minute, please!" cried Mr. Walks.

"I hope I may congratulate you both," said Mr. Perlay with unwonted geniality. Pritchard's dismissal had been upon his conscience, and he was delighted that all was turning out so well for the young fellow. He was greatly disconcerted at being taken to task.

"Have you ever detected me in a lie?" asked Pritchard.

"I haven't asserted that."

"I don't wish to cross-examine you, Mr. Perlay," said Arnold Walks quietly, "but you must have had something in your mind. What was it?"

"Well, perhaps Mr. Pritchard is a little given to romancing—humorously, you know—telling tales out of school at other people's expense."

"Have you ever caught me in such inventions? Have I ever made a tale of anything that happened in your office? Or is it that you are afraid I may do so now? That is it, Mr. Walks; I can see it all clearly. A very absurd yarn could be spun of Mr. Perlay's recent doings, and for fear of this he has tried to keep me from getting employment in the only business I am fit for. You are the third employer he has tried to turn against me: he succeeded with the other two—by sheer *suggestio falsi*."

"I never thought you could speak to me like this."

"Nor I. I thought you were another man altogether, constitutionally irritable, but a man I could respect and love—benevolent beneath your fussiness, and honour's soul. Wasn't I a blind fool?"

"John, do me justice now! In trying to discount the tales I expected you would tell against me, I assumed that you would embroider them. Nearly everyone does embroider, and it seemed safe to assume you were like the rest. I never meant to impugn your general veracity, or keep you from finding employment here. I am a violent, foolish old man, but I am not wicked. Don't let us part like this!"

But Pritchard walked away with his new employer, ignoring the old man's outstretched hand.

"He tried to ruin me, Mr. Walks, and I will never forgive him. If he were drowning and I could save him by stretching out a hand, I wouldn't do it."

"Nonsense, my boy, nonsense! You are not so base. You would jump at a chance of saving your old chief."

The case of the Corporation of the City of —— *versus* the Incidental Marine Insurance Company came on in the Commercial Court a week after the end of the Long Vacation. At Lloyd's the verdict was regarded as a foregone conclusion, and there was general surprise that the directors of the Incidental had allowed their underwriter to carry a personal vendetta so far.

But the defendants put up a stiff fight. Perlay made a poor witness. Cross-examination could not shake his statement that Calder had stipulated that the water-pipes should be nested, but the voyage book proved a broken reed. The defence suggested that the entry had not been made at the time; that the right-hand column was not used for remarks, but for some other purpose, and that it had been cut away where entries of another nature had been made.

Perlay denied this warmly, but he could not explain the cuts nor the Oxford bordering. The Court was asked to believe that he had not known they were there, although he referred to his voyage book daily.

The proceedings closed for the day with the insurance broker's cross-examination. In the evening Pritchard heard a full account of them from an insurance broker who had been in Court, a Mr. Whitfield White, at whose house in Hornsey Lane he was dining.

"Poor old boy!" said Whitfield White. "He seemed nearly demented when counsel were badgering him about the cuts in his voyage book. I wonder what is behind them?"

But Pritchard kept silence. Had he not vowed he would not stretch out a hand to save his old employer? Mr. Walks had pooh-poohed this as mere boyish bluster. Well, they would see.

After dinner he played billiards with his

host keenly and successfully, but at the bottom of his consciousness was a cold terror that he was drifting towards a catastrophe. Leaving the house, the realisation that he was still at the parting of the ways came to him as a relief. Since he had heard how the case was going, there had been no opportunity for action, which could not be taken until the morning. His hardness of heart all these hours had not committed him to anything. He could still come forward and, by telling the truth about the mutilated voyage book, save his enemy. He had come to regard the underwriter as an enemy. The issue was still in his hands. How glad he was of this ! How unspeakably glad that the door of repentance was not closed to him, although he had not made up his mind to use it !

Entering a first-class carriage at Crouch End, he found himself alone with Mr. Perlay and the maiden sister who kept house for him. The underwriter was asleep. For the first time since their quarrel the young man felt a stirring of his old protective pity for this violent old man who was so weak. To his surprise, Miss Perlay remembered him.

" I am glad you got in, Mr. Pritchard," she said, wiping her eyes. " I feel I must talk about this dreadful trial to some friend. I call you a friend, although you haven't treated poor Freddie very generously."

There was a circle, then, in which the tyrant was Freddie !

" Yes," she continued between her sniffs, " I know he did you an injury, but he didn't intend it. You don't know how he dreaded being made a laughing-stock. He was so obsessed by that that he never gave a thought to the other construction that might be put upon his words concerning you. I am sure he didn't. Except this awful trial, nothing has ever upset him so much as your refusal to shake hands with him. But this trial is beyond everything. Is it a fact, Mr. Pritchard, that if the Corporation lose this action they can come upon Freddie ? "

" How can the plaintiffs lose ? It will be proved to-morrow that pipes are safest nested, and that the monsters were broken, not because they were large, but because they could not have this protection, the natural inference being that if the pipes had been of one size, the damage would have been greater."

" But doesn't misrepresentation void a policy ? "

" When the conditions actually existing are more favourable to an underwriter than those which he alleges were stated, who will credit misrepresentation ? "

" You are not saying all this merely to comfort me ? "

" Not at all. The Incidental's success this afternoon was a mere flash in the pan. They haven't a leg to stand on. They made your brother look foolish, but they can't win—' honest Indian.' "

" I am glad to hear you say that, Mr. Pritchard ; my brother always says you have such good judgment. But even a verdict for the Corporation won't convince the world that Freddie told the truth about his voyage book."

" Your brother didn't mind how he blasted my reputation for truth-speaking."

" You are like all young people—you think only of yourself. Can't you feel for me ? You know what Freddie is at the best. What will he be under this slur ? If you only knew what my life with him has been ! "

To Pritchard now came a revelation—not a new thought (there are no new thoughts), but a real instead of a notional assent to an old one. The scope of no action could be limited. He could not strike his enemy without wounding his enemy's sister, and who shall say how many besides ? You dropped a stone into the water, and the ripples widened endlessly. Then how dare one start a sequence of suffering ?

The train was pulling into Finchley.

" Miss Perlay," he said hurriedly, " you can tell your brother that I will be at his office at nine to-morrow. I can give evidence about the cuts in the voyage book—I made them—which will set everything right. He needn't worry at all—tell him that from me."

" God bless you, dear boy ! Freddie shall have the good news before he leaves this carriage. I believe, if this pressure hadn't been removed, he would have had a stroke before the morning. You know he had a slight stroke last year."

Pritchard's evidence established the genuineness of the voyage book entry, and explained the mystery of the cuts and Oxford borders. The episode of the red-hot poker was very popular.

" *Credo quia impossible est*," said the judge, referring to it in his summing-up, which was dead against the defendants. The assured won hands down.

To what extent Pritchard's evidence was

responsible for the verdict is debatable—the Incidental's case at the best being so flimsy—but there is no question that it was decisive as regards the personal issue. Not Frederick Perlay, but Robert Calder came out of the case besmirched. If not a liar, he was at least a very reckless asserter. Coming away, he cut such a pitiful figure that Perlay, who had suffered and learnt much in the last twenty-four hours, accosted him.

"I am sorry, Robert. Can't we let bygones be bygones? Partly I was to blame. You would not have gone to such lengths if I had not impounded your books."

"You are a good fellow, Fred, a very good fellow. But the trouble began earlier, when I had your anchor removed. To oblige me, restore it to its old place. Saunders will look the other way. He acted under my pressure only. Screw it to your desk again, Fred, please, and we will lunch together in the Captains' Room in celebration. Do you remember that champagne lunch in the Captains' Room when you had successfully worked my getting a seat in your box?"

"Forty years ago, Robert, forty years on the first of next month! How time flies!"

It was quite an event in the room when Frederick Perlay re-screwed the anchor frame to his desk. Pritchard arrived just as the operation was completed.

"You might write two hundreds on each of these," he said, handing his old boss six slips.

While Briggs was entering them, Pritchard was toying with the anchor, tossing it negligently from hand to hand. Perlay eyed him apprehensively, but was powerless. He had long coveted a show of the Walks, Hunter account.

"Here are your slips, John," he said hastily.

Pritchard raised the anchor aloft. Not surreptitiously, but with a confidence hitherto shown only by the greatest insurance brokers, he dashed it to the floor. It worked better than ever.

BIRDS OF THE CITY.

SWEET birds that out of sunset fly
To this bald roof in maddest race,
Hither—ah, hither would not I,
But to a comelier nesting-place.

And there at morning I would wake
To freshnesses of April air
And lakeside coolness—winds that take
The cloudy lilac unaware.

Sweet nestward birds, it is not mine
To share your passionless content
With peeling wall and undivine
Harsh roof of man's imprisonment!

ERIC CHILMAN.



A LIGHTING EFFECT FOCUSSING THE INTEREST ON A DINNER-TABLE GROUP, A SCENE FROM THE GRAINGER-SAMUELSON FILM "THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER," WITH OWEN NARES, DAISY BURRELL, MINNA GREY, AND TOM REYNOLDS IN THE LEADING PARTS.

LIGHTING EFFECTS IN CINEMA PRODUCTION

DEVICES FOR OBTAINING PICTORIAL REALISM

By M. OWSTON-BOOTH

TIME was when the motion picture producer was as dependent upon the daylight for his results as the tourist for his snapshots. Work was rushed through with apprehensive impatience when the sun shone, and it was held up for tedious hours when it did not. In the best of screen photography there were glaringly conspicuous discrepancies in the illumination, since the photographic values of sunlight vary from hour to hour. The scenes of a film story are "shot" in the order most convenient to the producer, and not in their logical sequence, as they are seen on the screen. Hence it would often happen that two scenes, photographed respectively at mid-day and toward the end of the afternoon, would appear consecutively on the screen, showing a contrast in effect quite incongruous with the supposed rapidity of action.

The installation of artificial lighting was, therefore, one of the first essentials to the motion picture's rise from a place beside the penny-in-the-slot mutascope to a place among the arts.

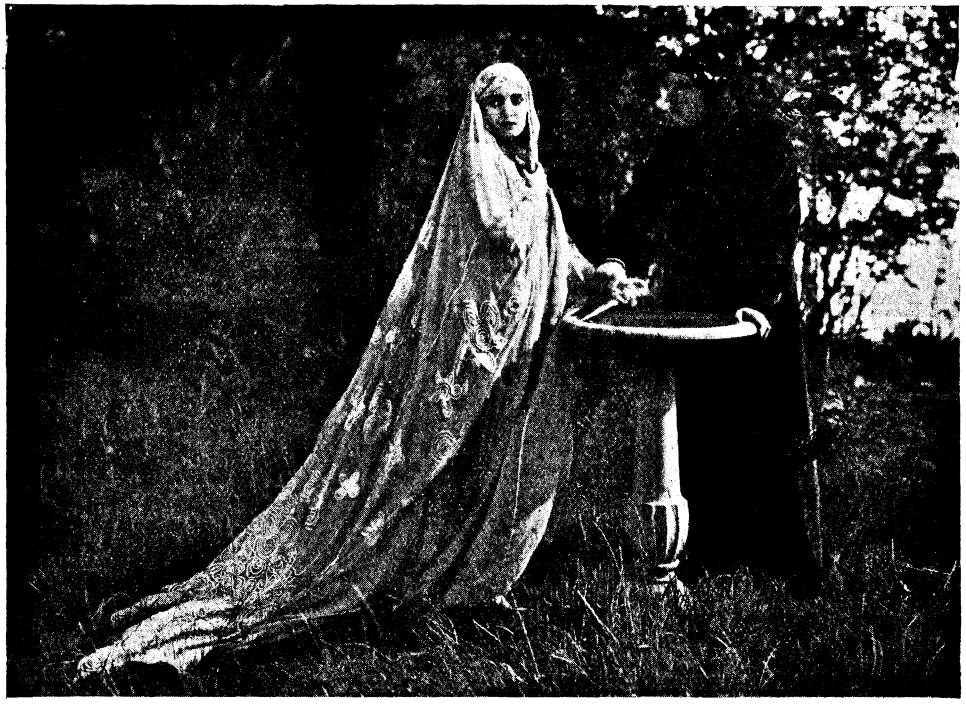
The first lighting system was a crude benefit compared with the ingenious and complicated apparatus of the present day, but it did ensure an even, dependable supply of light, that could be modulated at will, even though its photographic value was inferior to sunlight.

Gradually, with the passing of the years, the lighting of motion pictures has become a large and rapidly increasing school—there is no limitation to the power of lighting, not only to beautify the photography and to give a distinctive touch to each producer's work, but to lift a simple human story out of the commonplace into the ideal, to convey subtleties of the imagination, and to express emotions too transient to be passed through any more concrete



A CLEVER LIGHTING EFFECT OBTAINED BY THE USE OF ONE ARC LAMP AND REFLECTOR: VIOLET HOPSON IN A BROADWEST FILM.

a fine art in itself. The producer, working in co-operation with his art director and camera-men, finds in his "Cooper-Hewitts" and his "Kléeglights" a medium for pictorial creation as plastic as those of the painter and sculptor. In the use of such masters of screencraft as David Wark Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille—to mention only two of medium. Thus in Griffith's "Broken Blossoms" we saw the frail grey river mist—an illusion effected with smoke under special lighting—enshrouding the dismal Limehouse of Thomas Burke's portrayal, and were stirred with its poignant similes to the bruised and broken child of the slums, a wanderer in the shadows of fear.



A GARDEN SCENE IN THE VITAGRAPH FILM "THE VENGEANCE OF DURAND," WITH ALICE JOYCE IN THE PRINCIPAL RÔLE, AN EFFECT IN WHICH THE LIGHTING IS DESIGNED TO GIVE MORE PROMINENCE TO ONE FIGURE THAN TO ANOTHER.



A TORCHLIGHT SCENE IN THE VITAGRAPH PICTURE "THE BIRTH OF A SOUL," IN WHICH THE TORCHES ARE LIT BY SMALL CARBON ARCS.

In the sphere of the motion picture there are the *confrères* of men like Gordon Craig, Max Reinhardt, Stanislavsky, and Granville Barker, working toward the imaginative, the suggestive in dramatic settings. The early producers aimed at realism. Anything that departed from it seemed to them a piece of treachery against the natural motion pictures to be regarded with the same indifferent interest as the merely photographic in art.

Without, of course, any infringement of the laws of Nature, the modern producer makes the lights help to tell the story. For instance, in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," a Paramount-Artcraft picture, much of the



A CONCENTRATION OF LIGHT ON IMPORTANT DETAILS: JOHN BARRYMORE IN ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S "DOCTOR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE," A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE.

advantages of the photo-play over the theatrical production. They were mere photographers, seeking nothing other than what they saw before them. As the lighting effects chanced to be in reality, so must they be in the picture, without regard to dramatic value. But modern impressionistic methods have caused the merely photographic in breathless sorcery of the laboratory experiments of Dr. Jekyll is enforced by means of weird, almost bizarre lights, with their foreboding, heavy shadows.

Again, in "A Society Exile," starring Elsie Ferguson, the dramatic crisis of an arrest for murder is photographed with the officer of the law in grim silhouette against



A LAMPLIT SCENE IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE FROM MRS. HUMPHRY WARD'S NOVEL "LADY ROSE'S DAUGHTER," WITH ELSIE FERGUSON AS THE HEROINE.



THE PLAY OF FIRELIGHT ON MISS MARGUERITE CLARK IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE "EASY TO GET"

a flood of sunshine. The contrast is cleverly designed to grip the imagination.

More subtle are the effects in the garden scenes of "The Witness for the Defence." A brilliant lighting of the flowers gives a certain emphasis to the happiness of the incidents depicted, just as though the spectator were in that care-free mood when the beauties of Nature strike the eye with a new and joyous significance. The same applies to the sunshine-flooded court scenes in the more tranquil parts of "Counterfeit."

It is not generally known that artificial lighting is used quite extensively in the filming of "exterior" scenes, especially by British producers, who lack the natural assets of the Californian film colonists.

And here, by the way, it should be mentioned that to the British producer the subject of lighting is more full of difficulties and pitfalls than can easily be imagined. For months at a stretch in the winter the atmosphere is such that "exteriors" are the dread and the despair of all concerned, whilst the success of "interiors" is jeopardised continually by sufficient fog or mist filtering into the studio to change delicately diffused lights into so many separate beams. Science, however, is fast overcoming the difficulty of the interior atmosphere. At the Famous Players-Lasky British Producers' studios at Islington, where the London fogs recently baffled a group of distinguished American producers, an ingenious apparatus has been devised to keep the atmosphere ideally clear, no matter what the weather outside.

A group of players working out of doors on a dull day in England will be surrounded by large white reflectors, which catch up the bright rays of artificial light and reflect them back, diffused and softened, on to the figures. This gives a vastly better effect than could be obtained if the lights were directed upon the scene itself.



THE DRAMATIC CRISIS OF AN ARREST FOR MURDER IN "A SOCIETY EXILE," PHOTOGRAPHED WITH THE OFFICER OF THE LAW IN GRIM SILHOUETTE AGAINST A SUNLIT BACKGROUND. FROM THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE, WITH ELSIE FERGUSON IN THE LEADING RÔLE.



AN INSTANCE OF BACK-LIGHTING USED TO THROW A PLAYER INTO PROMINENCE AND GIVE PERSPECTIVE TO THE BACKGROUND: MAY ALLISON IN THE METRO FILM "THE CHEATER." (JURY'S IMPERIAL PICTURES.)

These reflectors are also a necessary adjunct to "interior" photography when the Sun Arc is used for the illumination of large settings, and also in conveying a light to a particular spot in the scene—often to the hair or the features of an artiste.

Their use must not be confounded with that of spotlights. These are small illuminators with single carbon arcs and condensors, most commonly employed to focus light upon the back of a player, thus throwing the figure into prominence and giving depth to the scenic effect behind. By this means perspective is obtained and all "flat" photography avoided. This method of "back-lighting" is also a great aid in evolving artistic "close-ups"; but in the case of "close-ups" the maximum of effectiveness can only be obtained by studying the requirements of different types of players—one might almost say different individuals, for although colouring mainly decides the intensity of light, brunettes needing more than blondes, pose and feature should have their share of consideration.

Spotlights are also much used for "cross-lighting," a system designed to eliminate certain facial lines or shadows. The lights are so placed that one light counteracts the shadows caused by another, with the result of idealistic portraiture.

With every method of lighting, whether from the small ray of the spotlight or the terrific flare of the three-million candle-power illuminators, the make-up of the artistes is a matter for careful study. A dark make-up must be more brightly illuminated than a fair one, and when two or more players of contrasting colouring



A GOOD LIGHTING EFFECT OBTAINED BY THE USE OF A SINGLE ARC LAMP AND REFLECTOR: MAE MURRAY IN A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT FILM.

have to share the same lighting in a scene, only experience can contrive a happy medium, preventing the fair hair and complexion being "burnt up" or the dark left in shadow.

A further glance back to the earlier days of the motion picture art reveals a remarkable advance in the filming of night effects. Within the memory of most picture-goers are the nocturnal street scenes, photographed in broad daylight and then dipped into a vat of dark blue dye which imparted a flat, unrelieved murkiness of tone; scenes into which crept glaring anachronisms of detail—women with shopping baskets, open carriages, postmen, and tradesmen's carts, moved inconsequently through the dusky streets. As for interior night scenes, they were so dark that one saw nothing except the vaguest forms until one of the characters turned on a light—the action was always managed thus—and illuminated the entire scene so that there was nothing to distinguish it from daylight ones, save possibly the costuming of the players.

Of course the more ambitious among producers wanted something more artistic, and it is interesting to note that although America was, and still is, the centre of motion picture production, it was from the results of the London Society of Night Photographers that they formulated their ideal in this direction.

The ideal was a lofty one, at the time seemingly unattainable, since the long exposures in still photography are out of question in the making of motion pictures. Nevertheless, it has been reached. The effect of moonlight in all its changing moods can now be obtained on a moonless night by a system of arc lamps throwing violet beams. Real moonlight photographs have a grey and chilly tone, but those obtained by this artificial lighting present perfectly natural contrasts of milky radiance and heavy shadow, with clear-cut silhouettes and the amazing wealth of detail which a



SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF LIGHTING WHEN TWO PLAYERS OF EXTREME CONTRAST IN COLOURING HAVE TO APPEAR IN THE SAME SCENE: WANDA HANLEY IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE "SECRET SERVICE."



A TWILIGHT EFFECT IN THE FOX FILM "SHOD WITH FIRE," WITH WILLIAM RUSSELL AS THE HERO.



A SUNLIT SCENE WITH A BRILLIANT LIGHTING OF FLOWERS PLANNED TO GIVE AN EFFECT OF HAPPINESS TO A SCENE IN THE PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE "THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE," WITH ELSIE FERGUSON AS THE HEROINE.

bright moonlight night does actually reveal. That, of course, is when an ideal moonlight night is required. Just as surely will the artificially obtained effects simulate the diffused light of the moon through an autumn mist or the rain-washed streets glimmering in a transient beam.

After-dark "exteriors" must be photographed after dark, and the curiosity of the public as to whether screen artistes work at night may be answered in the affirmative as far as these alone are concerned. "Interiors," on the other hand, can be photographed in the daytime in a darkened studio, with arc lights arranged to suit the setting and the action. If, for instance, the players are seated by the fireside, there would be carbon arcs under the grate, out of sight of the camera, but throwing their lights through the flames and illuminating them so that they register on the screen, for the fire itself, like gas-light and oil-flames, would be quite ineffectual in photography.



A CLEVER CANDLELIGHT EFFECT: HOPE HAMPTON IN A MAURICE TOURNEUR FILM.

That is why carbon arcs or mercury lamps are used in every kind of illumination in film production. When a player strikes a match in the dark and holds it up, cupped in his hands, to light a cigarette, a glow is cast over his features. This glow does not come from the match, but from a "baby"

carbon arc which he holds in his hands. In the same way, oil-lamps, flash-lights, candles and lanterns are equipped with illuminators of various sizes. In the case of a lamp being lighted by a player in the course of the story, a clever device is used to enable three distinct degrees of current to be passed through the wires, so that the light can be regulated under the player's hands.

Bringing night effects within the range of the producer's facilities has revolutionised the photoplay art for both author and scenario-writer. To what extent is best illustrated by the fact that Robert Louis Stevenson's romance "The Pavilion on the Link" has been pictured by Maurice Tourneur under the new title of "The White Circle," and that the action, almost in its entirety, transpires in the night-time —in the twilight of an evening in mid-Victorian London, under the moon of Italy, and in the bleak dusk of the Scottish moors. It is a revelation of what may be accomplished beneath the lights of Filmland.



THE IDEALISTIC MOONLIGHT EFFECTS OF A FILM FAIRY TALE, WHICH IS INCORPORATED IN "THE RIGHT TO LOVE," A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE IN WHICH MAE MURRAY PLAYS THE PRINCIPAL PART.

MADAME BLANCHEFLEUR INTERVENES

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

THE road, straight as a ruler, stretched ahead interminably, narrowing in the distance so that the poplars on either hand seemed to meet in a perspective that endlessly receded. For motorists this great military road of Northern France was all that could be desired; for tired pedestrians it was a tragedy of monotony. And Hilaire Coriot and Jean Rimbaud were both pedestrians and tired—insufferably tired.

"This road has no beginning and no end," said Coriot. "It makes me sick."

"My dear Hilaire," said Rimbaud, "it is because it makes you sick, as you say, that you exaggerate. I admit that it is a vile road, but it ends in Paris."

"I don't believe it, Jean. I feel that I shall be tramping this road all my life, and drop dead before I reach anywhere at all." Rimbaud glanced at his companion to discover whether he spoke in jest or earnest. Certainly Hilaire looked fagged out.

"Let us rest for a time," Jean said.

"If I sit down, I shall never want to get up again."

"I will see to that," said Jean. Accordingly they turned aside to the strip of grass by the roadside and stretched themselves in the shade of the poplars, which kept up a continual soft chattering.

"They are like girls telling secrets to each other," said Hilaire, gazing up at the trees.

"Secrets that everyone hears," said Jean.

"But no one understands. . . . Why did we set out on this fool's journey, Jean?"

"Because we were fools, I suppose."

"Undoubtedly. The terms of the bet were that we should walk three hundred miles with no more than one hundred francs between us, that we should not beg or steal or pawn anything, and that we should present ourselves at the Café Grenier on the fifteenth."

"That gives us ten days more, and we are a hundred miles from Paris," Jean said.

"The distance, my friend, is nothing, but without money and on foot, and this most detestable road. . . . How much have you left?" For the third or fourth time that day Jean Rimbaud dived into his pockets and produced two francs and some odd coppers. Hilaire Coriot did a little better—he produced three and a half francs. They looked resentfully at the coins and then gazed inquiringly at each other.

"We can give in and lose the bet," Jean suggested.

"Give in? And have all the Café Grenier laughing at us?"

"Let them laugh. Our turn will come another day."

"Jean, I am disappointed in you. This is not the talk of a brave man."

"On the contrary," Jean said, "it is I who am disappointed in you. It is you who protest that you can go no farther. As for me, I am as fresh as——"

"As what, for example?" Hilaire inquired.

"We will leave the freshness. On reconsideration, I admit that I am stale, horribly stale. You persist, then, in going on?"

"Most assuredly I persist; but if you prefer to wire for funds, and leave me to continue alone——"

"You hurt me—almost you insult me, Hilaire. Do you suppose that I, Jean Rimbaud, your partner in this affair, am going to slink back in a train? We will see it through or die together."

Though the situation was, indeed, sufficiently unpleasant, they both laughed. But that did not increase their meagre supply of money, nor did it solve the problem of how the absurd sum in their possession was to see them through. At that moment they were hungry enough to have

eaten more food than it would buy. It had been their idea (scoffed at by the frequenters of the Café Grenier) that they could work their way—Hilaire by selling sketches, Jean by inducing intelligent local editors to purchase a poem or an article for cash. But these expedients had failed. Hilaire could induce no *café* frequenters to buy his sketches, and Jean found local editors suspicious and obdurate. It must be admitted that neither was a good salesman, and any lack of appreciation on the part of their proposed clients was met with resentment and scorn.

"It is a pity," Hilaire said, "that we are not permitted to beg. I feel that I could beg beautifully for a good meal."

"For myself," said Jean, "I should prefer to steal. I always felt that I could steal gracefully."

"Well, since we can do neither," said Hilaire, "let us get a few steps nearer Paris. But I have had enough of this road. We will take the first turning to the right. It will lead us somewhere."

"Somewhere, no doubt," Jean said reflectively.

They rose stiffly and set out again. It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon, and they had already been some hours upon the road.



"The road, straight as a ruler, stretched ahead interminably, narrowing in the distance so that the poplars on either hand seemed to meet in a perspective that endlessly receded."

Hilaire walked with a slight limp, the result of a blistered heel, both were dusty, and each carried at his back a small and inefficient-looking knapsack. They might, to all appearance, have been mechanics on the tramp in search of work rather than shining lights of the Café Grenier, which is a rendezvous of youth in which—according to rule and tradition—all are lights and all shine.

Jean had just declared his confident belief that there was no road to the right, never had been, and never would be, when they came to such a road and a signpost bearing the word "Hermiton." Hilaire waved his hand at the signpost, and Jean took off his hat to it.

"To Hermiton, then!" Hilaire cried. "At any rate, the road is not straight; one has not to squint trying to see the end of it."

"I have heard of Hermiton," Jean said. "I heard of it when I was at school. I learnt something about it, but I forget what."

"You forget too much and you remember too much; that will be your undoing, Jean."

"Hunger will be my undoing, my friend. Let us find this Hermiton."

They proceeded in better spirits, for though Hermiton could bring them no nearer to the Café Grenier, it might at least provide them with food and a cheap lodging. It was also possible that Hermiton might be induced to buy one of Hilaire's sketches at a reduced price. Concerning the disposal of his own work Jean had given up all hope.

"I begin to think," said Hilaire, after an hour's heavy trudging, "that the signpost lied—that there is no Hermiton."

"Whoever heard of a lying signpost? I remember in one of my stories——"

"It was a bad story," Hilaire interrupted. Jean came to an abrupt standstill.

"At any rate," he said, "there is Hermiton. Look, down there in the valley."

There could no longer be any doubt that Hermiton did exist. It lay below them, at a distance of about half a mile—a compact cluster of red roofs, with a few outlying houses that gave the impression of sentinels, and from near the centre of the place a slender spire rose into the blue air. As they looked, there floated to them the musical chiming of a clock.

"Hermiton calls to us," said Hilaire. "No place has welcomed us since we broke into our last ten francs. It was lucky that we took the right-hand road."

"That remains to be seen," Jean said. "I would not make too sure of a welcome. We may yet have to sleep under a hedge."

They entered Hermiton with the ardour of weary pilgrims approaching a shrine. It was a pleasant little town, with one main thoroughfare and numerous smaller streets running down to the riverside. The inhabitants appeared to be indifferent to the arrival of the travellers.

"At any rate," said Hilaire, "they are not uncivil, and some of the women are pretty. Let us avoid the Grand Place and get down to the river. We are more likely to find what we want there."

The river front was the promenade of Hermiton; there the good citizens, in their hours of leisure, strolled in the sunshine or refreshed themselves outside one or other of the *cafés*, which now presented to Hilaire and Jean the appearance of havens of refuge. But which to choose? It must, of course, be cheap and at the same time attractive. Both young men pined exceedingly for the gaieties of the Café Grenier.

They walked slowly in the pleasant sunshine, and after having appraised, as it were, the possibilities of Hermiton, they turned at the end of the promenade and retraced their steps. Both stopped as by instinct before a *café* over which appeared the name "Moreau."

"So!" said Hilaire. "Then we have made the same choice. We will swallow some of Moreau's food, and he will swallow our last sou. After that—but no matter."

"It will matter a great deal in the morning," Jean grumbled.

"The morning? One should never think of the morning.... First let us wash out our throats."

They seated themselves at one of the tables outside the *café* and ordered drinks. Several of the other tables were already occupied, and from within came the occasional rattle of plates and the click of dominoes. There was about the Café Moreau, with its tall, narrow front, white-painted, its open door, and its green tubs of verbena, something friendly and inviting.

"This beer," said Jean, "makes me desperately hungry." Hilaire leant forward and touched his companion's arm.

"My friend," he said, "I have an idea."

"Wonderful!" said Jean.

"An idea with money in it."

"I also have ideas with money in them," said Jean gloomily. "But the most brilliant

idea hasn't a chance without——" Hilaire waved his hand.

"You will observe," he said, "that the people of Hermiton are interested in cards. Three groups are playing close by."

"Well?" said Jean. "Do you propose to lose what little we have? If so——"

"As you know," said Hilaire, "I am not only an artist in paint—I am also an artist in cards. I will become an entertainer. I will show them my card tricks, and you shall take round the hat." Jean gazed at his friend in amazement. Then he smiled, nodded, and thoughtfully tapped his empty glass.

"Beautiful," he said. "But will the *patron* permit the performance?"

"I will consult him at once."

Hilaire rose, entered the Café Moreau, and asked to see the proprietor. As a matter of fact, he addressed the *patron* himself, a short, plump man with a red face, a black moustache, and eyes that seemed to protrude and sparkle with suppressed excitement. Hilaire explained the situation frankly. Whether Moreau believed all he said, it was impossible to tell, for that worthy man appeared to be engaged in explosive communings with himself. Now and then he stamped, now and then he muttered, and again he clenched his fists. When Hilaire had finished his recital, Moreau fell back a pace and fixed him with his excited eyes.

"All this may be true," he said, "but—you will pardon me—it is nothing to me. If you were the greatest painter in Paris, it would be nothing to me."

"Then you refuse?" Moreau threw up his hands.

"I do not refuse. On the contrary . . . . Could you attract people to my house? Could you bring all Hermiton to the Café Moreau?"

"I would try," said Hilaire calmly. "And I see you have a piano. My friend and fellow in misfortune is an admirable musician."

"It is a supreme thought, an inspiration," cried Moreau, "but it may be an inspiration of the devil! . . . You swear to me that you have never been in Hermiton before?"

"I never even heard of it," said Hilaire.

"And therefore you have never heard of Jacques Tessier—accursed name!—or of Madame Blanchefleur?"

"No, never in my life have I heard of them before," said Hilaire. He was beginning to think that Moreau was mad, and that, after all, they had come to the wrong place.

"That Tessier is capable of any infamy!" cried Moreau.

"Infamy—in Hermiton? I should have imagined that here you all lived together as a happy family."

Moreau gave a startling and mirthless laugh. "You deceive yourself," he said. "Hermiton is a hot-bed of rivalry and suspicion."

"Well, let us come to the point," said Hilaire, who was growing weary of Moreau's questions and suspicions. "Will you or will you not permit us to entertain your guests and make a collection for ourselves?"

"It is too early to begin."

"As to that, choose your own time," Hilaire said. "But it is not too early for us to eat. We have enough to pay for a meal—of the simplest."

"It shall be served in fifteen — ten minutes," said Moreau. "Leave that to me. Artists, naturally, should eat well."

By this time Jean Rimbaud, tired of sitting alone before an empty glass, had come to the open door to investigate. Hilaire beckoned to him, and they seated themselves at a table, at the far end of the room, which Moreau indicated with a sweep of his napkin.

"If that fellow is not mad," Hilaire said, "we may be in luck, and if he is mad, we shall be no worse off than before. It seems, my friend, that we have landed in a nest of conspiracy. Something is going to happen, and the people principally concerned are Moreau, Jacques Tessier, and Madame Blanchefleur."

"I am too hungry to be interested," said Jean. "I don't care a sou for all the conspiracies in the world."

"But consider, Jean—Moreau, Tessier, Blanchefleur — what possibilities! And we are to be in it also."

"How?" Jean demanded, with a faint show of interest.

"It will be our business, provided Moreau can make up his weak mind, to draw a crowd."

"Here? To the Café Moreau?"

"Precisely. I must handle the cards like a magician, and you must play the piano like a master. Remember, the reputation of the Café Grenier, of Paris, will be at stake."

"I will undertake to draw a crowd if the piano holds out," Jean said. "And the

collection? We must not forget the collection."

"I am glad you reminded me of it," Hilaire said. "Moreau, Tessier, Blanchefleur—what delightful possibilities!"

Moreau himself served the dinner, and the two hungry adventurers devoured it without permitting themselves to think about the b ll. The cost of the wine alone, in which they pledged Moreau almost condescendingly, would have left them bankrupt. Moreau, in the intervals, trotted about amongst his other guests, but always he seemed to keep his vigilant and excited eyes on the table at the back of the room. When the coffee arrived, he sat down close to the now beaming and contented travellers, and looked from one to the other with an air of fierce determination.

"You have dined well? That is good." He turned to Hilaire. "I have watched you and your friend eat. I believe your story. I have a profound admiration for youth even when it chooses to be foolish. I will help you, then, if you will help me."

"We are at your service," said Hilaire. "I shall need half a dozen new packs of cards."

"As for me," said Jean, "my fingers itch to get at your piano." Moreau held up a restraining hand.

"Not yet," he said. "It will be time enough when my clients have dined. To-night there are fewer than usual. That accursed Tessier——" He paused abruptly. Hilaire nudged his companion.

"And Madame Blanchefleur?" suggested Hilaire. For a moment Moreau glared at him, then he patted his moist brow with his napkin.

"Pardon me," he said. "I had forgotten that I spoke to you of Madame Blanchefleur. A man in my position becomes suspicious . . . I will return confidence for



"What happened next, however, was as complete a surprise to Moreau as to the rest. Madame Blanchefleur, children doing here?' she asked. The children laughed until it

confidence. To-day an enemy of mine has opened in Hermiton a *café* which he has declared—this has been repeated to me many times—will cause the Café Moreau to close its doors. He has spent immense sums upon it; the place is like a great mirror. And he swears that he has a better cook than mine."

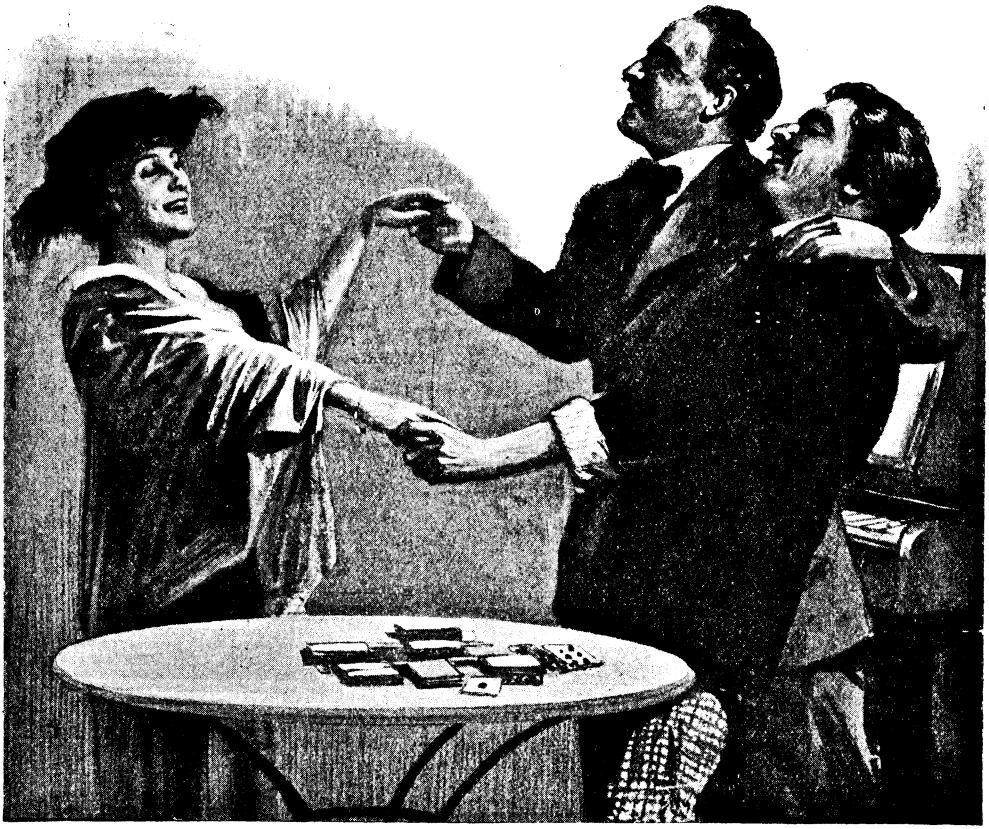
"Impossible!" cried both young men at once. Moreau's intent and strained expression relaxed. He smiled.

"Impossible, as you say. To-night he has attracted many diners to his new *café*:

"I remember the place," Jean said. "No sensible man, no man of taste, could prefer it to the Café Moreau."

"But the women, and Madame Blanchefleur?" suggested Hilaire. A strangled gurgle in Moreau's throat prevented him for a moment from speaking.

"Ah, the women!" he said, in a tone which seemed to mingle scorn and devotion. "They run after novelty; they forsake the old for the new. . . . This very evening, for example, Madame Blanchefleur is regarding herself in the mirrors of the Café Tessier."



without an instant's hesitation, advanced to the two young men and gave a hand to each. 'What are you was necessary for them to lean against each other for support."

some of my own clients are there. It becomes a case of war to the knife—the Café Moreau against the Café Tessier." At this Moreau brought his fist down on the table with so violent a thud that for a moment the dominoes ceased to click and the diners ceased to eat.

"I begin to understand," said Hilaire. "Is the Café Tessier near?"

"Just at the curve there; you can almost see into it from my door."

"Abominable!" cried Hilaire.

"Monstrous!" said Jean.

"The world of Hermiton is dominated by Madame Blanchefleur: she sets our fashions, she guides our taste."

"Who, then, is Madame Blanchefleur?" inquired Hilaire.

"No one knows. There are reports, but, I repeat, no one knows. She came to Hermiton only four months ago."

"Strange," said Jean, "that she should

have reduced the town to imbecility in four months."

"I said nothing of imbecility!" Moreau cried. "On the contrary, she has rendered Hermiton less imbecile."

"Well," said Hilaire, "what are we, my friend and I, to do?"

"Empty the Café Tessier," Moreau said, in a profound whisper. "Give here an entertainment that will draw all Hermiton to the Café Moreau. . . . When you are ready, gentlemen, I will announce that the entertainment is about to begin."

"The cards—give me the cards!" said Hilaire. Jean moved over to the piano with the air of a virtuoso who anticipates a roar of welcome. Then Moreau, advancing to the middle of the room, addressed his clients in a little speech.

It had always been his desire, the one wish of his heart, he declared, to make the Café Moreau the jewel of Hermiton. He had detractors, rivals, even base enemies—here he waved his hand in the direction of the Café Tessier—but he feared none of them. That night he was able, by great good fortune, to present to them two famous artistes from Paris; the one would perform miracles with cards, the other would make music such as Hermiton had never heard before.

The clients of the Café Moreau were clearly astonished; some of them smiled, some looked incredulous; all, however, applauded. This demonstration brought the outside customers crowding round the door. Jean struck a few preliminary chords; Hilaire, with sleeves rolled up, advanced, holding a pack of cards in a convincingly professional manner. Our adventurers, for the time, held the field.

Hilaire was a quite capable performer; he could do surprising things with great dexterity, producing a selected card from his own elbow or from the folds of fat at the back of the neck of some good citizen of Hermiton. It appeared, indeed, that he could produce a card from anywhere. Jean accompanied his movements with appropriate music; but when Hilaire paused to rest—and also to eke out his somewhat slender repertory of effective tricks—Jean attacked Moreau's piano with immense courage and enthusiasm. He had considerable skill and a self-possession which Hermiton, even if it had been disposed to be critical, could not have disturbed. But it soon became clear that Hermiton was not disposed to be critical; the Café Moreau gave itself up to enjoyment and appreciation, and when Jean, thus encouraged, burst forth into song and was joined by the card expert, the audience rose at them like one man.

"This is triumph!" Jean said.

"It is tremendous!" said Hilaire. "But how about the hat?"

"Ah, the hat!"

They looked round for Moreau. He was wedged into the crowd round the door; but whereas the crowd was gazing inward, Moreau was gazing outward. He was, in fact, watching the Café Tessier with feverish eagerness. Suddenly he turned on the entertainers a face that beamed with ecstasy.

"Continue! Continue!" he cried. "We are winning! It is superb!"

Above the clatter and murmur of the now packed *café* came to Moreau's ears the cry:

"But the hat!"

"It shall be filled!" Moreau roared. "Continue!" And again the performers plunged into a song of the Quarter which, though it was not entirely comprehensible to the auditors, roused them to fresh enthusiasm.

They were indeed winning. The pavement outside the *café* was crowded, the roadway was filling up. Moreau, mounting a chair, saw through the window a little procession streaming from the doorway of the Café Tessier in the direction of his own exalted establishment. And—yes—he gazed until his sight grew blurred—in the rear of that procession he perceived Madame Blanchefleur herself. He waited; his legs shook under him; he breathed in gasps. Madame Blanchefleur stood at the edge of the crowd, listening and smiling.

Moreau leapt from the chair and began to elbow his way through the crowd, crying:

"Make way, make way for Madame Blanchefleur!"

The piano crashed a final chord, the singing ceased, and at the same moment Madame Blanchefleur entered the Café Moreau, amused, radiant, self-possessed. It was Moreau's crowning triumph; he bowed before Madame Blanchefleur as though he welcomed her in the name of Hermiton and of the world.

What happened next, however, was as complete a surprise to Moreau as to the rest. Madame Blanchefleur, without an instant's hesitation, advanced to the two young men and gave a hand to each.

"What are you children doing here?"

she asked. The children laughed until it was necessary for them to lean against each other for support. Then Hilaire managed to say:

"Earning our dinner, Madame. And you? And why Blanchefleur, if one may ask? Are we to forget that you are, or at least were, Mademoiselle Fadette, of the Odéon?"

"To Hermiton," said the lady, "I am Madame Blanchefleur, but to my friends I remain Mademoiselle Fadette. I came to Hermiton to study provincial life. . . . But let us sit." A glance round the crowded room revealed to the little group that every eye was fixed on them and every table fully occupied. Moreau was prowling round them like an amiable jackal.

"A table!" Madame Blanchefleur demanded. Immediately all the men within earshot rose to their feet, bowing.

"No, no!" cried Moreau. "A table, a special table, shall be provided for Madame and her friends." A table and chairs having been brought from Moreau's private room, the trio seated themselves in the centre of the stage, as it were, and Moreau, with a flourish, placed before them a bottle of champagne and glasses.

"We are getting on!" said Hilaire. "But all this will not fill the hat."

"The hat?" inquired Madame Blanchefleur.

"Jean is to take round the hat. We have not yet paid for our dinner."

"My purse is at your disposal," said Madame Blanchefleur.

"So is Jean's hat," said Hilaire. "I insist upon the hat!" He explained to Madame Blanchefleur the absurd conditions of the wager, and came back to the hat with entire gravity. She laughed with such gaiety that half the watchers laughed, too. They were beginning to have the impression that the whole affair had been prearranged, and that Moreau was a cleverer fellow than they had taken him to be.

Madame Blanchefleur, assuming that smile which never failed to captivate the Odéon, rose lightly to her feet.

"Give me the hat," she said.

"It is a ridiculous hat," Jean said. "I protest."

"And I insist." Jean handed his hat to her. It was indeed somewhat dilapidated, but savoured unmistakably of the Quarter. Madame Blanchefleur looked at it with affection.

"Yes," she said, "I have done with Hermiton. I must return to Paris, where men wear such hats." Then Madame Blanchefleur, to the delight of all present, announced that she was about to make a collection for the superb artistes who, by so happy a chance, had visited Hermiton that day. She added that even superb artistes sometimes found themselves in temporary financial straits.

By this time the Café Moreau had arrived at a pitch of excitement which perturbed its proprietor. Those behind climbed on to tables and chairs; those in front stood up; the weight of the crowd outside threatened to carry away the door-posts and burst in the windows. All cheered. And Madame Blanchefleur performed the hat-trick with a grace that drew generous contributions from an assembly determined to stand well in the eyes of Hermiton's ravishing guest.

While the collection was being made, Jean played slow music on the piano. When Madame Blanchefleur handed the hat to Hilaire, Jean ceased to play, and there was a moment's profound silence. Then Madame Blanchefleur took Jean's place, touched the keys with caressing finger-tips, and sang, for the first and last time, in the Café Moreau. The extraordinary thing was that the song was all about Hermiton, and the river, and a pair of lovers whom an unkind Fate had forced apart. And there was hardly a man who heard her who did not believe that, by some means or other, she had discovered his secret. The effect was unexpected. The applause was subdued, almost awed; it might be said that there was a sense of tears in it. Madame Blanchefleur had touched the sentimental heart of Hermiton.

"You made that song yourself?" Hilaire asked.

"Yes, I made it yesterday. It is my farewell to Hermiton."

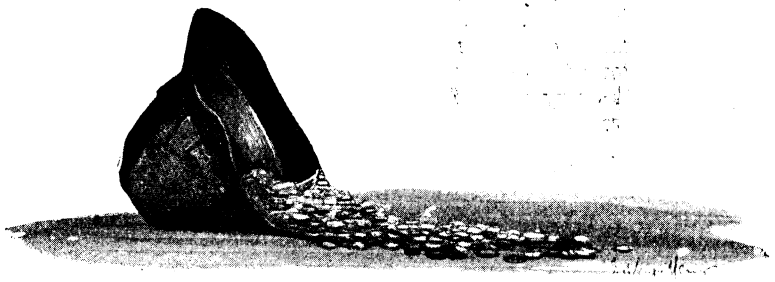
"We are rich," said Jean, who had been counting up the contributions in the hat. "We shall win our bet, Hilaire."

"In four days," Madame Blanchefleur said, "I will meet you at the Café Grenier. I will share your triumph. But I refuse to walk with you."

Moreau approached them. He rubbed his hands, spread them in a wide gesture, then clasped them together and rested his chin on them. His eyes still protruded, but their expression had changed.

"This is the most wonderful evening, the

most exalted, of my life," he said. "Three supreme artistes in my house, and one of them the incomparable Madame Blanchefleur. . . . I have just returned from a little inspection. The Café Tessier is empty, the Café Moreau is full, the crowd outside is immense. . . . And at the edge of the crowd is Tessier himself—yes, I repeat, Tessier—biting his nails! Permit me to offer you another bottle of champagne."



CROCUSES.

UP the long hill to Tusculum
Crocuses star the path:
Through the cracks of the old grey stones they come,
Up the long hill to Tusculum,
Where an Empire's highway passed.

Crocuses bordered their chariot way—
Crocuses spring in the grass to-day.
Many the race that has reigned and striven,
Prophets and rulers to exile driven,
Ere the glory and might of Rome were given
Over to moth and rust.

And after the tale of our day is done,
The crocus will laugh to the pale March sun—
Long after we are dust.

A. M. LAWRENCE.

THE HOUSE OF THE CHOSEN

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

THERE was a man in the forests of Bubujala who called himself M'seru, and he was once a petty chief, being overlord of a community which numbered twenty men, thirty-five goats, and as many women. One night, *cala cala*—which means "long ago," and stands equally for the passage of years or weeks—a woman, his own sister, had come to him from the Great King's city, bearing weals of a flogging and marked on the forehead with three red bars which had a terrible significance.

For so are marked they who are doomed to go up to the cave of the Devil Woman of Limbi, there to be slain and eaten. How the sister of M'seru came to escape from the city and her fate, cannot be told. She was the second wife of the Old King, who was old even in those far-off days.

M'seru, in the fear of death, hid her, and in time a child was born, upon whose tender arm she pricked and slashed two bracelets, because he was the true son of the Old King, and all such sons were so marked. Then K'salugu M'popo got news of her, and sent his regiments to eat up the village and destroy the woman, her child, and all the woman's relatives.

M'seru heard of the coming of this host, and fled to the forest, taking the child, the woman, and his favourite wife, and for more years than he could count he sat down with the people of the Bad Village at the foot of the high range which separates the Bubujala from the Akasava country. Here he was safe from the king, though he might have been in some jeopardy from the Bad People, who are outlaws and of all tribes, owing their immunity from destruction to the high caves in their rear, which shelter them in emergency, and to the fifty-mile strip of marshland in front of them, across which there is only one causeway.

But the Bad Men received him kindly, and a small chief took the king's wife into his house. M'seru was by this chief protected, and built a little house of straw, and broke ground for his garden, and might have lived and died in peace, but for the news which came pattering across the causeway one misty morning.

He was respected by the Bad Men and their women because he had been a chief under the Great King. And often they brought their disputes to him for judgment, the chief of the Bad Village being a little mad from sleeping sickness. And he judged wisely and fairly.

Kofolaba, his nephew, and the son of the Old One, grew in honour, since the Bad Village had pride in his company. And they taught him their arts, such as how, by placing the right thumb so and the left hand thus, a man's neck could be broken as easily as a rotten stick. And the king's son profited by their teaching, and at the age of seventeen had twice broken the necks of the village watchmen.

Then, when he was nearly thirty, came the news, and M'seru, who had come to usurp the functions of chieftainship, called a palaver of all the people.

"If it is true that the Old King is dead, then Kofolaba is king of this land, for he is the son of the Old One by his second wife, and all men know that the first wife had no children, being put away because she burnt the king's fish."

"That is truth," said all the people.

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"Now, I have heard strange news," wheezed M'seru, for he was a sick man. "The Old King is dead by the magic of Sandi Ingona, who is the white lord of the Akasava and very cruel. And Masaga, the son of K'salugu M'popo, the king, is dead by witchcraft, and also the great chief Fomba of these parts. All these men died at Sandi's hand."

"Lord," said one of the near audience, "this Sandi hanged my own brother in the year of the rains because of a woman palaver. He is very unkind."

"I tell you that there is no king but my nephew Kofolaba," said M'seru, "and there is no man marked for king, though the white men have sent for the Wise Woman of Limbi"—there was a great coughing and swaying of heads at the mention of that terrible name—"to put upon the new king the wonderful magics which give him courage and haughtiness."

"If Kofolaba is king, shall he not go up to the city?" asked one, and there was a murmur of assent.

"So I say," said M'seru, nodding feebly, "for if Kofolaba is accepted by Sandi, we shall be rich, and the Bad Village will rule the land, and that which we desire we shall take, and all will grow fat and comfortable."

Such immoral standards had M'seru adopted through his twenty-five years' association with the men of the Bad Village.

The palaver continued until the dawn, and it was agreed that Kofolaba should take with him twenty spears, and that each, for the sake of appearance, should assume the title and dignity of chieftainship, also the style and magnificence, but as to this there was some difficulty, for the Bad Village was poor.

Nevertheless, it was argued that following a route which led through certain defenceless villages, and by wisely utilising the candidature of Kofolaba, the necessary equipment might be acquired on the way.

The city of Rimi-Rimi heard news by some mysterious agency, not only of the approaching embassy, but all the circumstances which made the candidature of Kofolaba possible. Of a sudden people who had never heard of the Old King's wife, who was the sister of M'seru, or, if they had heard, had thought her dead, were in possession of every fact of the woman's flight.

"Some of this they could have learnt by *lokali*," said the puzzled Hamilton, "but how do they get the gruesome details? One of the little chiefs showed me the spot where the woman crossed the river the night she bolted."

Sanders nodded. "I stopped worrying about the native intelligence system when I heard the story of the Argonne battle from Bosambo the day after it was fought," he said.

The two men were standing in the basin before the king's house, watching a number of men erecting a small hut. It was not like other huts, being octagonal in shape, and the grass that the men wove between the skeleton uprights had been dyed purple.

"What is this, sir?" asked Hamilton.

"They call it *syaki m'molo*," said Sanders, "which, translated roughly, means the House of the Chosen. O Kabalaka!"

A man came out of the king's hut, the towering chief who had stood at the Old King's elbow.

"I see you," said Sanders in greeting.

"I see you, white man," said Kabalaka, the chief.

"O Kabalaka," said Sanders softly, "this morning I sent for you to my fine ship, and I said there should be no 'white men' in the mouths of black men, lest these white men curse them. To me you shall say 'lord,' also your king shall say 'lord,' for I am lord of these parts and over you all, and will rule you with wisdom and give you justice, so that no man shall be oppressed."

"There is no king in these parts," snarled Kabalaka, "but presently shall come one we know; you we do not know—white man."

The words were hardly out of his lips before Sanders's whip fell across his face. Three times he lashed, and the man fell back with a cry, covering his face.

"How do they call me?" asked Sanders, in so low a voice that the final "*k'saso*" sounded like a hiss.

"Lord," said the man sullenly.

"That is well."

Sanders had walked two paces away, when he turned.

"Who shall make any man king"—he addressed the question to Kabalaka—"and why do you call this hut the House of the Chosen?"

"Lord," said the minister, who was shaking with rage, "into this hut, which will be filled by great ghosts and devils, will go the Chosen. And whosoever the Old Woman finds there shall be king, for that is the custom since the world began."

"O Kabalaka," said Sanders, "suppose this woman finds a common man—would he be king? Or a chief who had evil plans—would he be king?"

"Lord," replied the minister sullenly, "no man but the Chosen dare go in to the ghosts, because he would die by magic."

"Go on," said Sanders.

"There shall come one to the hut who will put upon him the robe," said the chief, "and fasten about his arm the beautiful bracelets—one who is greater even than white lords, for she has death in her hands, and in her eyes, and she is a drinker of blood, of white"—he hesitated—"of white lords' blood."

"Fergisi," said Sanders in a voice scarcely above a whisper, his steely eyes fixed on the other.

Kabalaka was taken aback, and his knuckles went to his mouth.

"*O ko*," he said. "Who spoke that word?"

Sanders did not answer.

"Now, listen. I will tell you this," he said, "and let all your people know that I, who slew the Great King by my magic, and crushed his city into the earth and slew his warriors around him, and him in the midst of his warriors, I, Sandi, say this, and it is not the words of the spider, but of me.* There is no man or woman in this great land who does not lie within my hand, and there is none greater than me, for the people who sent me are as the leaves in the forest, so many. Not all of the same tree are they, but of four great trees and many small trees. What? Shall they all fall down because of the word of an old woman who is mad, who sends her *tchu* to frighten children?" He saw the minister wince, and knew he had used a forbidden word, that was akin to the unspeakable and unpronounceable "Ewa" of the Lower River. "If she keeps the laws of my masters, she shall be as one with you, and I will protect her; but if she breaks the laws, be sure I will slay her, though she hold M'shimba M'shamba in one hand and death in the other."

"Lord——" began Kabalaka.

"The palaver is finished," said Sanders, and, turning on his heel, went back to the beach and to his ship.

"What about the person Kofolaba?" asked Hamilton, when they had got aboard.

"We'll see," replied Sanders. "The people of the city are quiet enough. I don't think the interest in Fomba's execution lasted out the night."

"Native memory——" began Hamilton.

"Is short, I know," said Sanders, "but these people are different from any natives I have met. Did you notice the discipline and evolutions of the guards? Did you observe the silk cloak which the Old King wore? Do you know that the cave in which the Devil Woman of Limbi lives is guarded by twelve virgins who keep an everlasting fire burning, and die if it goes out? Do you guess the significance of the bracelet which is the sign of kingship?"

Bones had strolled to the after-deck of the *Zaire*, and had been an interested listener.

"Dear old Administrator and Commander-in-Chief," he said excitedly, "I've got it! I see your artful old drift! Find the jolly old bracelet, kill the naughty, naughty lady, put out the fire, and there you are!"

"Where are we?" asked Hamilton. "Really, Bones, you're an ass!"

"I'm the man to do it, dear old Excellency," said Bones. "Give me a couple of trusty middle-weights——"

"You're wrong, Bones—for once," said Sanders kindly.

"For once!" murmured the scornful Houssa.

"That isn't my drift at all. And it isn't a new phenomenon, Hamilton." Sanders turned to his second. "We had hints of an older civilisation. Do you remember the ghosts of brass in the Akasava?"

"Good Heavens!" gasped Hamilton. "Do you mean a Roman civilisation?"

Sanders nodded. "The Romans came to the country two thousand years ago," he said; "some came by way of the Big River, some came down through Egypt. There were legionaries in Lower Egypt in the days of the Emperor Decius. I think these were the fellows who came south and west. They were obviously part of the Eastern Army. What is Mount Limpisi, or Limbi, but Mount Olympus?"

"That's Greece, dear old Administrator," said Bones in gentle reproof, "just outside of Athens. Pardon the correction, dear old superior, but geography is my strong point."

"Not so strong," smiled Sanders. "To be exact, it is in Macedonia, through which the Eastern Armies fought. Then we have

* The story-tellers of the tribes escaped the stigma of lying by prefacing their inventions with the words: "The spider (or the beetle) told me this story."

the bracelet — the old insignia of the Consular office—the purple cloak which the kings have always worn, and even an oracle in the shape of this infernal woman."

"Greek," murmured Bones protestingly, "the oracle of the Adelphi—in Greece."

"Will you shut up?" demanded Hamilton.

"Well, that is all," said Sanders. "Bones is right, except that the Adelphi is in the Strand. But Rome adopted most of the Greek gods and wonders. The Eastern Army practised them. Your vestal virgins and their undying fire are purely Roman. Rimi-Rimi is obviously Roman inspiration, and was sometime called 'Rome.' It is built on seven hills. What do they call the Old King's minister of justice in the native tongue?"

"That's a new one to me, too," said Hamilton. "*Seni-seni* is a word I've never heard."

"Censor," said Sanders, rising with a laugh, "and the captains of the king's guards are *seni-suri*—'centurions.' It fits beautifully. The king was called *Oogoosti*, which does not require any very striking mental effort to associate with 'Augustus.'"

Hamilton was silent. His tired eyes roved the countryside. By what route did they come, these tattered adventurers of Rome, who had set up their standard in this hot and fearful land, dreaming Heaven knows what dreams of empire?

"The Island of the Golden Birds!" he cried suddenly, and Sanders nodded.

"There, I do not doubt, they planted the eagle of Rome," he said.

It was a depressing picture Sanders had drawn. For hundreds of years these masterful aliens must have toiled, drilling the raw savage into a semblance of Rome's invincible soldiers. There must have been a dynasty of sorts, quarrels, intrigues, jealousies, rebellions and battles, and all the time the wild was working into their blood, and the barbarism of their environment overgrowing them until the tan and olive of Rome became browner and browner and then—black.

Hamilton shivered. "What are you going to do about this Kofolaba person?" he asked.

"I think we'll meet him half-way," said Sanders, and beckoned his orderly.

"Abiboo," he said in Arabic, "go you to Yoka and have steam. Bones"—he turned to Captain Tibbetts—"take a machine-gun detachment and hold Execution Hill. I don't suppose you'll have any trouble. Go round the edge of the town, so that you do not alarm the people."

Half an hour later the *Zaire's* anchor came up, and she swung round to the south. They who watched from the shore—and the whole headland was lined with people—slapped their chests in joy.

"For now," said one who spoke the thoughts of all, "this wicked man has gone, and there is no king in the land, who shall prevent us doing what we desire?"

He, for his part, had a matter to settle with a certain maker of clay pots who had married his sister, and he went back to his hut for his spears.

There were others in the city of Rimi-Rimi who also desired justice. The *Zaire* was hardly out of sight before the first of the family feuds was being settled on the fighting field before the Old King's palace.

"Ha-ha-ha-ha!"

Bones and his machine-gun detachment were sited on the Hill of Execution, had witnessed the beginning of trouble, and had acted according to orders. The bullets whipped up the dust at the fighters' feet, and the bickering came to a quick end.

"This man Sandi," said one exasperated contestant, wiping the sweat from his forehead, for he had run very fast, "is a man without pity or gentleness. Gondinda was a dead man, and my spear was well at his stomach. *O Sa!* This is no place for a man to live!"

Sanders heard the rattle of shots and, guessing the cause, smiled faintly. He had one hand on the telegraph, ready to swing the *Zaire* about—for this new steamer of his boasted two screws—when the firing ceased.

"A little local disturbance, I think," he said quietly, and kept the boat with its nose to the centre of the narrow channel.

Sanders did not rely upon chance information. In the Territories there were many people of the Old King's country, some of whom were in Government service—men who had fled before his wrath, guiding their frail canoes through the leaping waters of Hell Gate—and Sanders had brought with him a dozen of these reliable men, and had sent them north and east and west under the direction of Ahmet, his chief spy. So it was not by chance that he brought the ship to an anchor in the slack waters of the Fongini River, which runs into the Great River sixty miles south-west of Rimi-Rimi.



"'O Wise Woman of Limbi,' he said, 'you come in time, for I have a king to crown.'"

He had not long to wait, for in two hours there came into view a small flotilla of canoes, paddling closely on to the bank. Sanders lifted his anchor and steamed to meet them.

The party was small, but obviously important. Kofolaba's embassy had looted well and richly. And Kofolaba's head was enveloped in a rusty silk hat which would have wholly extinguished him but for the fact that Nature had endowed him with large, sustaining ears.

They came aboard, this motley party, arrayed in the tawdry magnificence appropriate to the occasion. Sanders's eyes scrutinised Kofolaba with interest. He was a tall man and stout, with sleepy eyes and long, powerful arms.

"O white man, I see you," said Kofolaba.

"I see you," said Sanders, "but I do not hear you when you say 'white man.' For in this country, Kofolaba, all white men are lords, and all black men are the servants of those lords. And when a black man says 'O white man' to me, my arm goes mad."

"Lord," said Kofolaba, subdued and impressed, "I do not know the customs of the white—of the lords, for I have never seen anybody of your terrible colour before."

"Let us make a palaver," said Sanders, and drew up his chair, the party squatting in a semicircle about him. "I believe you are Kofolaba, and the king's true son. And I have heard that you come that I may give into your two hands the lands of the Old King."

As to what attitude Kofolaba would take on his meeting the white stranger, there had been innumerable palavers, and a decision had been reached. Kofolaba cleared his throat.

"Lord," he said loudly, "I am the king of this land by right, and take no gift from any man. And these men who are my chiefs know well that I am a proud man, and very fearful in my anger. Also——"

"I also am a proud man," said Sanders grimly, "and no man has seen me in my anger, because he has died before. As for you, Kofolaba, you are a thief and a friend of thieves; for who does not know the Bad Village, where men live who are outside the law? And these chiefs of yours, what are they? They are men of wickedness, who are chiefs of nothing but their own houses and their own women, whom they have stolen. Whose skin do you wear about your waist, Kofolaba? Ask a dead man in the village of Mumusu."

"*O ko*," said Kofolaba, aghast, "it seems that you have eyes that walk by themselves."

"I have ears," said Sanders significantly. He looked round at the unprepossessing group, and suddenly he pointed.

"What boy is this?" he said, and indicated a thin, uncomfortable lad, the only other member of the party to wear a European hat.

Kofolaba dragged the embarrassed boy unceremoniously into the foreground.

"Lord," he said, "this is my true and beautiful son."

"True he may be," said Sanders, "and as to that, you know best, but he is not beautiful."

He looked at the boy's arm and saw the tattooed bracelet. Kofolaba, observing this interest, placed upon it a wholly wrong construction.

"This boy is from a woman of the Bubujala, who was a daughter of the chief, and you, who I know are a father and the husband of many wives" — Sanders blushed as he never would have blushed in the old days—"will have in your stomach a lovely feeling because of my son. Now, I tell you I am a proud man, and will not ask for what is my own; but because of my son I will crawl at your lordship's feet for the kingdom which is mine by right."

Sanders turned to Hamilton.

"What do you think of this boy?"

"Black but uncomely," said Hamilton.

"O Kofolaba, and all people, hear me," said Sanders, "for I have had a great thought in my head, and my spirit has spoken into both my ears. How call you this boy, Kofolaba?"

"Buru," said Kofolaba solemnly.

"Hear my judgment," said Sanders. "This boy Buru, being of the royal house, is acceptable, and I will set him up on the stool, and people shall call him king"

There was no trace of parental affection in the look which Kofolaba shot at his son, and he was silent. Then Sanders saw a gleam of hope dawn in the man's eye, and the frown vanished.

"Lord," he said mildly, "that is your lordship's wisdom. So let it be! And Buru shall rule, and I will be his humble servant, and shall be near-by to advise him in all the cunning matters which kings must know."

"He shall be king," said Sanders again slowly and deliberately, "but you, Kofolaba, and your thieves shall go back to the Bad

Village, and there shall live in peace with all men. And be sure that, if you do not, though the marshes surround you, and M'shimba M'shamba himself sit down in your hut, I will come after you with my soldiers, and I will feed your bodies to the fishes, by death ! "

Kofolaba shuddered at the words.

" Lord——" he protested.

" The palaver is finished," said Sanders.

He came back to Rimi-Rimi with a new king, who spent all his time in the engine-room, watching the wheels go round.

It was not until the dawn that the *Zaire* dropped anchor off the beach of Rimi-Rimi. For the palaver had been a long one, and Sanders had delayed his leaving the place where the meeting had occurred until he had watched the disgruntled deputation well out of sight.

Abiboo called Sanders an hour before the dawn came, and he was dressed and on the deck when the sun flashed up. Hamilton fixed his glasses on the Hill of Sacrifice.

" No signal from the post, sir," he said fretfully. " I hope to Heaven Bones hasn't been getting into trouble."

But Sanders did not speak. He was looking at the beach. " I knew we were popular," he said ironically, " but I had no idea our popularity was so amazingly great."

For the beach was black with people and black for miles with half-naked bodies. The slope leading from the beach to the city was tight-packed, and on the beach alone, where the boats landed, was there any space.

" What the dickens is that ? " asked Sanders. " It looks like a hayrick."

He pointed to a small yellow object standing at the water's edge. The launch was got ready, and, towing two canoe-loads of Houssas, it chugged its way to the beach.

Then Sanders saw. The thing on the beach was human, though it was pardonable in him to mistake it for a rick. For the arms were encased in sleeves of plaited straw, and a straight, broad dress, dyed and woven in fantastic patterns, reached from the neck to the ground. Over the head was a sort of cage, from which dangled a thick fringe of straw tassels. It carried no weapon. About its waist was girded a broad belt of leather, from which depended something which made Sanders gasp, for it was a sword, not of the native pattern, but a pattern which he had seen in many a museum—the sword of a centurion of Rome !

No other weapon had the figure. As the launch came nearer to the beach, Sanders saw that the figure was bent, and that the two hands which gripped the staff were encased in gloves made from the paws of leopards, the claws painted or polished white.

He stepped daintily off the bow of the launch and walked toward the figure. " O man," he said, " who are you in this strange and terrible dress ? "

The attitude of the spectators, who were drawn back a respectable distance, struck him as curious. There was on their faces an expression in which horror and curiosity were mingled, and five out of every six of the men and all the women had their knuckles to their teeth.

" I am no man, O Sandi," said a shrill voice in Bomongo. And then it flashed upon him, and, despite all his experience and coolness, his breath came faster, and something like a thrill passed through him.

" O Wise Woman of Limbi," he said, " you come in time, for I have a king to crown."

She laughed—a wild cackle of laughter.

" Lord, you come too late," she said, " for this day have the people of Rimi-Rimi chosen their king. And he waits in the House of the Chosen for my magic."

Sanders looked from her to the crowd and back to the crooked figure. He saw a dozen faces eager to give him news.

" O woman," said Sanders, " no man is king of this land save by my wish."

" Man," croaked the figure, " this was by your wish, for in the House of the Chosen I found two men, one who lived and one who was dead. And he who was dead was Kabalaka, the chief, and he who lived was the white man whose eye is of glass."

" Bones ! " gasped Hamilton. " King Bones ! "

* * * * *

" Presence of mind, dear old Excellency," said Bones, when they got him on board. " I had a tip that dear old Mrs. Devil-Person was expected, and, knowin' the weakness an' depravity of the indigenous native, I went down to take a look at the jolly old thing. And when I saw Kabalaka sneak into the hut, I knew that he was being simply awfully naughty."

" He did not tell me the Old Woman was

coming so soon," said Sanders. "Well, Bones, what happened?"

Bones beamed around. "I saw the whole thing in a flash, dear old sir. Into the hut I went. There was the wicked old Kabalaka. He was *awfully* annoyed!"

He did not tell of the fight to the death, Kabalaka's stabbing sword against Bones's jammed pistol, for that was not Bones's way. He boasted only of the things that did not matter.

"So you're the Chosen," said Hamilton, and distressed Bones for the rest of the evening by addressing him as "Your Majesty"!

The fifth story in this series will appear in the next number.

SPRING.

BAREFOOT, the spirit of Faery Spring
Goes by, while, clutching their fresh primroses,
The children follow to hear her sing
The song of the days when the Earth uncloses.

And sick hands twitch at her garment's hem,
As though in its folds their cure lay hidden;
The pain of Winter is past for them,
While Youth in their old eyes shines unbidden.

She laughs like an unripe maid, so clear,
With a joy from the deeps of her bright soul swelling;
But many are those who may not hear,
And her footstep passes many a dwelling.

There are waves that never shall reach the shore,
And lovely trees that should swell to blossom,
Like dreams that the sleeper knows no more,
Lie stark in a cold Earth's wintry bosom.

Ah, joy that rings o'er the valleys around,
You shall find no home in many a spirit!
The earth is awake to the lovely sound,
But our dead still sleep, and they cannot hear it.

LEOPOLD SPERO.



"There was also the astonishingly tactless attitude of one Masterson, who developed a habit of popping up in the *rôle* of the unwelcome third."

A LESSON IN TACTICS

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

"REALLY, Joe," said Miss Linton with some asperity, "I can't see that you have any right to dictate to me like this." Mr. Joseph Drinkwater wriggled uneasily in his chair; his plain but healthy countenance assumed the expression of one who is compelled to say something unpleasant for someone else's good. He floundered doggedly on.

"I mean to say—well, dash it all, Phyllis—I mean, you're always going around with some fellow or other—Bill Laking one day and young Masterson the next, and all that sort of thing. I don't get a look-in." He gloomed.

Miss Linton bent upon him a clear and searching blue eye.

"I may be rather dense, Joe," she observed composedly, "but I don't know why you should have any more of a 'look-in,' as you call it, than anyone else."

Mr. Drinkwater writhed again; the conversation seemed to be rapidly approaching delicate ground. It is always a task of some little difficulty to explain to a girl that your claim to exercise authority over her movements is based upon your intention to propose to her one day, and that your failure to do so hitherto is due to a reluctance, vague but undeniable, to relinquish the cherished ease of bachelorhood. Yet Joe must either make this point clear or retire defeated from the field. The poor fool essayed a compromise.

"Well—what I mean is, I thought you—we—I mean—sort of understood——"

Miss Linton rose to her feet gracefully and without haste.

"I shouldn't, Joe," she said warningly; "you're not the right build for thinking—or understanding, either." With which cryptic utterance she smiled kindly upon him and was gone.

For some little time Joe sat glowering in his chair, frowning ominously and gazing vacantly into space. Then he rose in his turn and wandered heavily across the terrace and into the hotel lounge. A tall, fair young man, prone upon a settee, looked up at his coming and emitted a hail of welcome.

"Hullo, Joe! Why the corrugated brow?"

Mr. Drinkwater hesitated for a moment, and then crossed over to a seat beside the other.

"Women are the devil, Bill," he said wearily.

Mr. William Laking grinned broadly and beckoned to a waiter.

"What you need," he remarked cheerfully, "is obviously a hair of the dog. Now, what's the trouble?"

Joe contemplated his bosom friend in some indecision. He admitted a profound respect for Bill's brain-power, the quality of which had been emphatically demonstrated many times in the course of their long and frequently stormy friendship. His advice, therefore, was not to be despised. Nevertheless, Joe was conscious of a certain unwillingness to unburden his soul, since by so doing he must inevitably appear little better than a congenital lunatic. However, Bill's ridicule was undoubtedly preferable to the total loss of Phyllis, and he nerved himself to the confession.

"It's Phyllis."

"It generally is," said Bill.

"Well, I mean it's the way she's going on."

"Eh?"

"I don't get a look-in. She's all over the shop—first with you, and then with somebody else. It's not fair to me."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Laking densely.

"Why *not?* Dash it all, man, you know—I mean to say, one of these days——"

"One of these days you're going to put it to her, as man to man, and so forth?"

Joe nodded.

"And meanwhile," pursued Bill, as one who wishes to grasp every salient detail, "you object to her behaving as she likes?"

"Well——"

"On the other hand," went on Bill remorselessly, "you are not quite sure that *you* want to give up all *your* freedom and settle down for good?"

"Don't be a fool," said the goaded Joe. "It's nothing of the kind. For two pins I'd tell her to-day."

"Plunge ahead, then."

"It wouldn't be any good. She's fed up with me at present."

"Can't blame her," said Bill caustically. "Well, what *do* you want to do?"

Joe considered for a brief space.

"Bring her round," he explained finally.

"Make her appreciate your sterling worth, I suppose you mean?"

"Well—yes, in a way. I don't know how, though."

Bill regarded him reflectively

"I'll bet a quid," he said slowly, "that you, in the innocence of your heart, have actually had the nerve to tick her off for neglecting you."

Mr. Drinkwater flushed and gazed at his shoes.

"Well——"

"Oh, Joe," cried his friend joyously, "you're a gem! Outside Brighton Aquarium I don't think I've ever seen anything like you! You fill my soul with joy."

The affronted Joseph eyed him morosely; Bill's persistent refusal to regard him as anything but a small child became strangely galling at times.

"Laugh!" he said bitterly. "Laugh! I'm glad I amuse you."

"You do indeed," assented Bill heartily. Then his face sobered and he assumed an expression indicative of deep thought.

"The only thing for you to do," he said at length, "is to make Phyllis jealous."

"It's jolly easy to say that. How's it done?"

"Why, tag after someone else, of course."

There followed a pause, while Joe surveyed his counsellor dubiously.

"I see what you mean," he said. "But there isn't anyone."

"That's a fact," said Mr. Laking, temporarily at a loss.

It was indeed a fact. The town of Rappington is without doubt extremely attractive to the gouty and rheumatic, but to the normally healthy being it offers few allurements. It owes its existence solely to the presence of a number of sulphur springs, brine baths, and other natural phenomen-

of a similar health-giving character; its visiting population, therefore, consists almost entirely of those who hope, by a little judicious treatment, to eradicate some painful and vindictive ailment. Generally they bring with them their own bath-chairs; the porters at Rappington Station are popularly supposed to be the most expert bath-chair handlers in the kingdom.

It follows, therefore, that Rappington is not a place usually selected by those bent upon a bright and care-free holiday, for, apart from the entertainment afforded by the sulphur springs and the brine baths, it has little to offer in the way of recreation.

Neither Mr. Laking nor Mr. Drinkwater seemed quite at home in this galley. They had not the swashbuckling air of the habitual bather in brine, nor the riotous demeanour of the confirmed hot-spring fiend. Their presence in the hotel was, nevertheless, quite simply explained. Joe was there because Miss Linton was there, the latter in turn attending upon a gout-ridden uncle. Bill's avowed reason for coming was the necessity for keeping an eye upon Joe, an excuse which seemed to the latter gentleman singularly devoid of reason.

Be that as it may, there could be no doubt that Mr. Drinkwater, in observing that there was no one suitable for the post of decoy in this matter of bringing Phyllis to heel, had smitten the nail shrewdly upon the head.

For a moment the twain meditated in silence. Then Joe grunted happily and slapped his thigh.

"I know!" he cried. "Jane!"

Bill started visibly and looked at him in bewilderment.

"Jane?"

"Yes. I saw her just before we came away. She said she might run down for a day or two to try and cheer things up a bit. She's just what we want!"

Joe grinned delightedly at his friend.

The latter displayed a certain lack of enthusiasm.

"Don't be an ass, Joe. Jane's not the sort of girl at all."

"Why not? I think she is. Quite good-looking in a way, jolly cheerful and all that. She'll do beautifully."

He glanced again at Mr. Laking, to perceive that the latter was evincing signs of embarrassment and even annoyance. Joe stared, and then emitted a low whistle.

"By Jove, old man, I forgot! Haven't you and she had a row, or something? You used to be pretty thick at one time."

Bill swung himself irritably to his feet and snatched out his cigarette case.

"My good Joseph," he retorted sourly, "do try to pull yourself together. Go and have a brine bath. Ask Jane, by all means; she won't come. If you think she'll let you use her as a sort of stalking-horse to help you get Phyllis, your little brain is working all wrong."

"But she won't know," said Joe patiently. "Why should she?"

Mr. Laking gave vent to a brief impatient noise and strode abruptly away across the lounge. For a moment Joe sat staring wonderingly after him, then, shaking his head vaguely, rose also and made his way to the telephone office.

* * * * *

Miss Jane Kirk, arriving unheralded two days later, caused some slight stir among the decrepit denizens of the Springs Hotel. Even the hall-porter, himself a reformed rheumatic, so far forgot his dignity as to touch his cap to her. For Jane was one of those fortunate people who inspire affection. Tall, slight, and by no means beautiful, she was endowed with an uncanny knowledge of the art of wearing clothes and a smile calculated to evoke a response from an archbishop. Joe, having known her all his life, naturally had not noticed these things, and saw in her merely a good sort, blessed with a sense of humour and an unfailing optimism, but not, of course, a patch on Phyllis, whom he had known for nine months.

Miss Kirk, who was by instinct and profession a journalist of no mean order, was probably fully aware of her position in his esteem, but showed no sign of her own feelings on the subject.

"Well, Joe," she said to him on the evening of her arrival, "what's the idea?"

Joe appeared vaguely ill at ease.

"Eh?" he said guiltily.

"Why were you so anxious to get me down here that you had to 'phone me about it?"

"Hate writing letters," mumbled Mr. Drinkwater; "always use the 'phone. Thought you'd liven us up a bit. Jolly dull down here."

Miss Kirk regarded him curiously.

"Who's here?" she asked.

"Oh—nobody much."

"Phyllis Linton?"

"Uh—huh," said the uneasy Joe, "and Bill, of course."

"Bill Laking?" asked Jane.

Joe nodded.

"I see," she went on. "Then my mission is to brighten you up. I am vastly flattered, Joe."

Joe moved uncomfortably: he was never quite sure whether Jane was using him as a species of private joke.

"Well, you said you'd come down," he remarked, "ages ago."

"So I did, Joe," responded Miss Kirk. "So I did."

* * * * *

In the days that followed Mr. Drinkwater applied himself earnestly to the task of awakening within the breast of Phyllis the demon of jealousy. In so doing he acted with what he assured himself was masterly cunning and generalship. At first he bore himself towards Miss Linton as if no such person as Jane had ever darkened the hotel doorway. Morning and afternoon found him at Phyllis's side, while Mr. Laking, with a truly noble generosity, took it upon himself to keep Miss Kirk amused. (Joe, remarking the somewhat stiff meeting between the latter pair, and the subsequent gradual unbending of Jane, was forced to the conclusion that he had been right about the row.)

He himself encountered some little difficulty in dealing with Phyllis, who continued to regard him with a tolerant amusement which goaded him into a frenzy of determination. There was also the astonishingly tactless attitude of one Masterson, who developed a habit of popping up in the *rôle* of the unwelcome third at the most inopportune moments. Thus it was with a thirst for revenge that Joe turned in due course to Part II. of his programme.

Thenceforward his mornings were devoted to Phyllis, his afternoons to Jane. Neither lady exhibiting any surprise at this development, Joe, after the elapse of a suitable period, proceeded firmly to Part III.

This, the climax of his performance, involved the complete ignoring of Phyllis and the assiduous cultivation of Jane; and here, for the first time, he was conscious of misgivings. By retiring in this manner he had perforce to leave the field open to the egregious Masterson, who was not slow to grasp his opportunity. Joe felt that rarely had he disliked anyone as he disliked the man Masterson. A person with tight yellow hair which grew in terraces over the top of his head surely ought not to be allowed to exist in a civilised community. However, having once put his hand to the plough, Mr. Drinkwater was not the man to turn back, and he set his teeth and forged resolutely ahead.

As if there were not difficulties enough, there was added presently the little matter of Bill. Joe was finally compelled to speak to him about it.

"I say, old man," he said one morning.

"Sir to you?"

"Er—about Jane."

"What about her?"

Joe coughed deprecatingly.

"Well, what I mean is, there's no need for you—I mean, you're spoiling it all."

Bill took his pipe from his mouth and fixed his ally with a look of pained reproach.

"*Spoiling* it all?" he echoed. "Me? My dear old Joe, I thought I was helping to buzz things along!"

"Oh, yes," said Joe hastily, "so you are, of course. But it's no good *both* of us going about with Jane. That won't make Phyllis sit up and take notice. I must do it alone. You always seem to be there somehow," he explained lucidly.

Bill regarded him open-mouthed.

"I have been remiss," he acknowledged at last, "very remiss. I must efface myself." He brooded over his problem. "But what am I to do?" he asked piteously.

Joe felt a twinge of compassion. A solitary life at Rappington is a certain incentive to suicide.

"Dunno, old man," he said frankly. "But it won't be for long."

"I hope not," grunted Bill. He sank back in his chair and relit his pipe. "Go to it and get it over, for goodness' sake!"

Thereafter for some considerable time Joe enjoyed the undiluted society of Miss Kirk. More than once a glimpse of the pathetic figure of Mr. Laking, looming forlorn in the offing *en route* to the brine baths, stabbed him sharply in the conscience; undoubtedly Bill must be having rather a mouldy time. Then a view of Phyllis, chattering gaily to an escorting Masterson, served to stiffen his resolve and force his attention to the matter in hand. In this he was assisted by two somewhat remarkable developments.

Firstly, Phyllis, to his intense annoyance, showed no sign whatever of having observed his defection; the ghastly Masterson appeared amply to suffice her simple needs.

(Remarking this, Joe comforted himself with the reflection that Phyllis was not one to wear her heart like a wrist-watch.)

The second of the developments referred to did not for some time dawn upon our simple Joseph. It was only by slow degrees that he became aware of a growing pleasure in Jane's society. But as day after day slid by, and he accompanied Miss Kirk for walks, for drives, and on expeditions to the local theatre, it became evident to him that old Jane had many excellent characteristics which he had somehow hitherto failed to notice. He began unconsciously to take an interest in her companionship for its own sake and not merely as a means to an end. He discovered that Jane's outlook on life tallied in many matters pretty accurately with his own. Moreover, she owned a sense of humour which, if at times a little obscure to him, contrived to impart a new interest to the most commonplace events. Joe found himself, to his surprise, painfully working out small jests and epigrams in order to make her laugh. (A sturdy, able fellow, Joe, but no swift thinker.) It was also significant, though he did not observe it, that about this time he ceased to think of her as "old Jane."

Thus matters stood when an incident occurred which at long last opened the eyes of Mr. Drinkwater to the inner meaning of all this. Primarily, as a matter of fact, it was Bill who hastened the end.

Without warning, and with what seemed to Joe a remarkable lack of tact, Mr. Laking emerged from his hermit-like seclusion and resumed his duties of chaperon and general adviser. He would turn up casually and, with no word of apology, join their expeditions; Joe, hot-foot in quest of Jane, would find her engaged in light-hearted converse with the intruder. Finally Mr. Drinkwater, having endured for some time in silence, was constrained to take his friend to task.



"Joe, hot-foot in quest of Jane, would find her engaged in light-hearted converse with the intruder."

"I say, Bill," he said a trifle peevishly, "what are you up to?"

"Eh?" said Bill blankly.

"I thought we arranged that, if the scheme was to work, you'd have to push off and leave us alone. If Jane's always got the two of us with her, it won't have any effect on Phyllis. She won't be a bit inclined to get jealous if you're there as a sort of gooseberry."

"That's where you're wrong," said Bill equably. "I thought it all out in a brine bath the other day. If she sees Jane can collect a couple while she can only bag one, she'll be as sick as blazes. With Jane, of course—not you. Thence she'll proceed to jealousy. We're a limited company — Jealousy Limited, high-class family purveyors. Absolutely infallible. Anyway," he added plaintively, "I don't think it's nice of you, Joe, to try and drive me to sulphur baths like this. If you knew what I've been through——" He sighed expressively.

Joe, while disagreeing heartily with his friend's theory, was compelled to acquiesce. Short of physical violence, there was no apparent method of shaking Bill off, and as the latter was very much larger than

nimself, such a remedy seemed to hold out little prospect of success. So Mr. Drinkwater, with an effort, wreathed his features in a cheerful smile and got along as best he might. It was none the less noticeable that his regard for Bill had sustained something of a jolt.

The climax came one afternoon when Joe was returning with Jane in the hotel dog-cart from an excursion abroad. As they entered a scanty and dingy village, he recalled a lack of cigarettes, pulled up before the post-office-general-store, and vanished within. This was the highly inauspicious moment selected by a small and grimy boy to thrust a fiery red head through the fence immediately beneath the horse's eye. The animal, unaccustomed to such phenomena, uttered a shrill, astonished noise and set off briskly down the hill, the reins flapping foolishly behind.

Joe, emerging at speed, was greeted by a rapidly-dwindling vision of the back of the dog-cart, swaying perilously as the horse settled down to his work. After a second of paralysed inertia, Mr. Drinkwater shot away in pursuit as if impelled by a strong spring. Even at that congested moment he was conscious of a sudden and inexplicable conflict of emotions.

As he progressed down the hill in a series of immense bounds, on a sudden there shot past him one on a bicycle, who flung back unintelligible words and proceeded rapidly to overhaul the runaway. Joe, panting audibly, saw the procession vanish round a bend in the road. Turning the corner a moment later, he came upon a piquant little tableau.

The dog-cart stood intact by the roadside, the horse cheerfully absorbing nourishment from the hedge. The bicycle was propped against the wheel, and Mr. Laking, with an expression of profound relief, was engaged in patting an entirely composed Jane upon the back.

A harmless scene enough, but one sufficient to thrust abrupt understanding upon Joseph with the speed of a lightning flash. He halted in his tracks and stood staring voicelessly.

He understood *now* his increasing delight in Jane's company; he understood *now* why the sight of Phyllis and Masterson had of late strangely lost the power to aggravate him (he admitted this latter circumstance now for the first time). For a moment he staggered under the shock of this discovery; then he pulled himself together and strode forward.

"Not hurt, Jane, are you?" he asked anxiously.

"Not a bit," replied that lady cheerfully. "It was rather fun, really. And Bill stopped us beautifully."

"Oh, did he?" said Joe glumly. It was like Bill to turn up on a bicycle and do things with a flourish. He said no more; his brain was still dizzy with the recent revelation. He climbed to his seat, and the *cortège* moved on, Bill, by now an inseparable member of the party, following awheel. The latter and Jane had the conversation to themselves for the rest of the journey. Joe had many things to occupy his mind.

* * * * *

At seven-thirty that same evening Mr. Joseph Drinkwater, arrayed for dinner, came slowly down the stairs into the lounge. Some hours of strenuous and profitable thought had served to clear away the fog and make his position plain to him. He knew now where he stood, and cursed himself heartily for a blind fool in that he had not realised before that he had been standing there all the time.

It was every moment becoming more plain to him that his affection for Miss Linton had been in the nature of an infatuation, aroused probably by the fact that her eyes were very large and very blue. Now that he came to consider the point deliberately, he saw that he had, to put it bluntly, made a fool of himself in that direction, and that his passion for Phyllis had been imperceptibly but steadily waning for some time. Hence his reluctance to propose to her. The strange part of the whole affair seemed to him to be that he had only just realised, after knowing Jane for all these years, that he was in love with *her*. Still more strange that he should not have seen that Jane was worth fifteen of Phyllis. Anyway, he intended to set all that right without delay.

He quickened his steps and glanced round eagerly for Miss Kirk. At this point he was aware of a familiar voice that spoke his name.

"Joe!" said Miss Linton.

He perceived that she sat by the side of the inevitable Masterson upon a couch in a corner. In response to her beckoning finger he moved towards them. Strange, he thought, that he could look upon them thus unmoved.

Miss Linton was becomingly flushed and seemed unusually at a loss for words.

"Joe," she said hesitatingly, "I—I—that

is, we—we wanted you to know first that we——" She paused.

"Ra-*ther*," corroborated Mr. Masterson, a man of few words.

"Well," pursued Phyllis, blushing yet more deeply, "I'm—we want you to congratulate us."

"That's the ticket," agreed Mr. Masterson. "Absolutely! Engaged, and all that, old sportsman!"

Joe regarded him coldly; he could not approve of Phyllis's choice.

"I'm glad," he said. "Congratulations!" —and, achieving a neat bow, was gone through the open door. Upon the terrace he paused and breathed deeply. Well, that was that! And now for Jane!

A blurred outline advanced rapidly from the shadow, halted before him, and revealed the figure of Bill. In the clear light from the doorway Mr. Laking displayed the symptoms of some strong emotion. His face was irradiated by a vast, expansive smile, while the gaze which he bent upon Joe positively glittered with sheer joy of life.

"Joe," shouted Mr. Laking, "I've done it!"

"Done what?" asked Joe coldly. He felt in no mood to sustain Bill's ebullitions.

"Congratulate me, old man," said Bill. "Jane and I are engaged!"

There was an instant of deadly silence, while Mr. Drinkwater, open of mouth and wide of eye, stared at his friend as at some terrifying spectre.

"And," pursued the ecstatic one, "as a matter of fact, it's all due to you, old Joe! Jane and I had a bit of a row, and I came here in rather a rage. I was a bit upset when she came down, too. But it worked out rippingly, because when I sheered off and did brine baths and things, and left you alone with her, she got a bit jealous, I think. So as it was your idea, in a way, old man, I owe it to you! You were a top-hole decoy, Joe! I can't stop now. Got to change. See you at dinner!" And Mr. Laking, carolling gaily, sprang through the door and away.

Joe staggered to the parapet of the terrace and leaned heavily against it. What had he ever done to deserve this blow? Why——

"Hullo, Joe!" said Jane's voice in his ear.

He spun round and glared at her defensively; this was rather too much. Could he not even be alone with his sorrow?

"Bill told you, I suppose," said Miss Kirk easily. "Now I want a word with you, Joe. Next time you think you're in love with someone, and want to make her realise your great value, don't use *me* as a magnet to pull her to you."

Joe gaped at her. Events seemed to be getting a little out of hand.

"Good Heavens!" he said faintly. "Did Bill tell——"

"Bill told me nothing," said Jane. "I've got eyes of my own and a small quantity of sense. I knew that all along, Joe, you poor old idiot. I didn't say anything, because I thought you needed a lesson. I've known you a long time, and I know you rather better than you do yourself, I fancy. You've a lot to learn about women, Joe, if you thought you could use me like that."

"But——" said Joe blankly.

"Let me finish. You thought you were in love with Phyllis Linton, and you weren't. Now you think you're in love with me, and you're not. Not a bit. You'll go on thinking so about all sorts of people till you meet the right one. I know you, Joe. When I've gone away, you'll heave a sigh of relief to think you're still an unattached bachelor."

"Look here——" began Joe, stung to protest.

"Oh, yes, you will. You're a good sort, Joe, but you don't know what you want yet. You've been quite useful to me, though, all the same, which serves you right for thinking you could play off one girl against another like that."

"Eh?" said Joe dizzily.

Jane turned to leave him, moved away, and stopped again a yard from him.

"When I saw what you wanted me to do for *you*," she said, "I thought *you* might as well do something for *me*. Bill and I had —a—a sort of row some time ago, and— and you were a *splendid* magnet, Joe!" She nodded brightly and disappeared.

Mr. Drinkwater gazed after her for a moment, then turned and, leaning upon the parapet, stared thoughtfully out into the darkness.

THE LOST GOD

By JOHN RUSSELL

Illustrated by C. M. Padday

IT is a common thing for a prophet to cry out in print. Saints have been known to write their autobiographies, and even angels are credited now and then with revealing most curious matters in language quite plain and ungrammatical. But I have seen the diary of an authentic god who once went to and fro on the earth and in the waters underneath.

His record is the Book of Jim Albro, and he made it at Barange Bay, which is Papua, which is the end of the back of beyond and a bit hanging over—the great, dark and smiling land that no white man has ever yet gripped as a conqueror. He neglected to copyright it himself. The chances of his returning to claim it are apparently remote. And Jeckol says that nobody would believe it, anyhow. So I shall feel quite safe in making free of that remarkable work, just as he set it down with a leaden bullet on some strips of bark and left it for those who came after to find.

In his very blackest hour Jim Albro must have known that somebody would come after him—some time. Somebody always did come after him, no matter how far or to what desperate chance his errant trail might lead. He was that kind. All his days he never lacked the friend to hunt him up and to pack him home when he was helpless, to pay his bills or to bail him out at need—one of those irresistible rascals born to a soft place near the world's heart, whose worst follies serve only to endear them, whose sheerest weakness is accepted as the manifestation of an engaging caprice, while they go on serenely filling the blank cheques of destiny. . . .

And there, to my mind, is the truly grim touch of the story—that he should have had to settle up at last amid the continued applause of a multitude, with the savour of the popular admiration still rising about him.

"The pampered pet o' fortun'," said Cap'n Bartlet, abruptly breaking a long silence. "That's what Jim Albro always were. He'd have his own way with man or devil. Throw him how you like, he'd land on his feet."

"Aye," confirmed Peters, the lank trader from Samarai. "Or if so be he couldn't stand—why, the crowd would nacherally fight for the privilege of proppin' him up and buyin' him the last drink in the house."

We were strung all along the rail on the after-deck of the little *Aurora Bird*, as she began to grope the passage through the barrier reef. Talk had been cheap enough on the long drift up the Coral Sea, during restless days among the flawed trades, when every possible theory of Albro's fate and the fate of his three white shipmates and their native crew had been thrashed to weariness. But the present sense of that mystery held us all by the throat, for we were come at last to Barange and the scene of it.

And something else held us—you might call it a spell and not be wrong. The lazy airs off-shore bore down to us a scent that is like nothing else in the world—of rotting jungle and teeming soil, of poisonous, lush green and rare, sleepy blossoms, heavy with death and ardent with a fierce vitality. This is the breath of Papua, stirring warm on her lips, that none who has known between loathing and desire can ever forget. Many men have known it—traders, pearlers, recruiters, gold-hunters—and eagerly have sought to know more and have died seeking. There she lies, the last enigma, guarding her secrets still behind her savage coasts and the fringe of her untracked forests—the black sphinx of the seas, lovely, vast, and cruel.

We had been watching the widened gap of the bay off our quarter, the palm-tufted threads of beach, the hills a-quiver in the heat haze, and the nameless dim mountains beyond. For an hour or more the only sounds had been Bartlet's bluff orders to the Kanaka at the wheel, the gentle crush of foam overside, the monotonous cry of the

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leadsman, and the tapping of reef-points and creak of tackle as our sails failed and filled again. Each one of us was intent for some sign of the disaster. Each one had a question pressing on his tongue—pretty much the same question, I judge—but nobody cared to voice it until the Cap'n spoke.

"You think he's alive?" piped Harris then.

"I think he's alive," said Bartlet, without turning his shaggy grey head. "He weren't made to finish hugger-mugger in a hell-hole like this. I'm backing the luck of Jim Albro, that always had his way."

"Like as not," said Peters, and span the cylinder of his big Webley revolver and chuckled a little, "like as not we'll find him sittin' on a stump all so lofty, with the niggers squatted 'round in rows, addressin' of the congregation."

You will note—and a queer thing, too—that this happened before we learned for ourselves the first sure detail of the affair at Barange Bay.

It was now the twentieth of April. On the second of November preceding the pearling schooner *Timothy S.* had left Cooktown on her lawful occasions for Joannet Harbour in the Louisades. She had never reached Joannet. A month later she had been spoken by a Sydney steamer up among the Bismarcks, where she had no ostensible business to be. And early in March some natives of the west coast, friendly or only boastful, had passed word to a missionary of a British schooner cut off with all hands at Barange. That was strictly all. It remained for certain friends and backers at Cooktown, with or without lawful occasion, to link up the vaguely reported outrage with the actual and private destination of the *Timothy S.*, and to send our search-party go-look-see.

But Jeckol snorted.

You could hardly blame Jeckol. Among the five of us he was the only man who had never crossed Jim Albro at some point in the career of that meteoric luminary. And, besides, it was Jeckol's business to snort. You must have read his clever bits in *The Bulletin*—those little running paragraphs that snap and fume like a pack of Chinese crackers? He had been loafing about Bananaland on vacation just before we started, and of course he got wind and wished himself along. Trust a pressman to know the necessary people and a chance for copy.

"I've heard a deal of talk of this Albro since we weighed anchor," he said. "What's all about him? He wasn't commanding the *Timothy S.?*"

"No," drawled Peters. "No, he didn't command. Mullhall was skipper."

"Did he launch the scheme, then? Was he the discoverer of this wonderful virgin shell-bed they were going to strip?"

"No," returned Peters. "No, you couldn't say he had any regular standin' in the expedition at all. He shipped as a sort of supercargo—didn't he, Cap'n Bartlet?"

"Cabin-boy, more likely," said Bartlet, in his slow, heavy way, "or bos'n's mate, or even midshipmite."

Jeckol eyed us all around, but nobody smiled.

"You're getting at me," he said. "Never mind. Only I'm going to write the yarn, you know. You'd much better help me pick the right hero. What's your famous Albro like?"

"The takingest chap that ever stood in shoe-leather," cried young Harris, with a rush. "Absolutely. I never saw him only twice, but I remember just how he looked and what he said. The first time he was drunk, but—but that was all right. He sang 'Mad Bess of Bedlam' to make your hair curl. And one night in Brisbane, when he took on the Castlereagh Slasher for two rounds——"

"Six foot of mad Irishman," said Peters, "and about three inches of dreamy Spaniard atop of that, to put a head on the mixture, you might say. Blue-black wavy beard, and an eye like a blue glass marble——"

"With the sunlight shining through," Harris shot in.

"James O'Shaughnessy Albro." Peters lingered upon the name. "As to his luck, Cap'n Bartlet may be right, but I wouldn't call it so. He was born too late. He should ha' been a—a conquistador, d'y' call 'em?—and gone swaggerin' up and down in the old time, holdin' pepper rajahs to ransom and carvin' out kingdoms. Whereas he was only Jim, and anything you like between a navvy and a millionaire.

"Nobody knows what he'd done back home—prob'ly he got to bulgin' over too many boundaries, and needed room. He blew into the Endeavour River one season with a tradin' schooner of his own—curly maple saloon, satin divans, silver-mounted gun-racks—by Joe, you'd ha' thought he was goin' to trade with cherryubims for golden harps in the isles of paradise. And

so he very nearly did, too, what with the dare-devil chances he took, till he lost craft and all on a race back from Thursday Island."

"Wrecked?" asked Jeckol.

"Just gambled. Old man Tyler could lay his *Hawfinch* half a point nearer the wind than a chap has a right to expect from an archbishop. Jimmie paid over at the dock-head, and went weavin' his way up Charlotte Street a beggar, turned into a political barney they were havin' there, and made them a roarin' speech on somethin'—temperance, prob'ly. And, by Joe, if they didn't elect him a divisional councillor the next day!"

"I've heard of that," proffered Harris, with a grin. "Wasn't it the same winter he did a quick dash to the tin mines for his health? It seems there was a beauteous and wealthy widow. So he started for Mount Romeo. My word, he'd turn the worst scrape into a romance, that fellow! They say he made a big winning at Romeo, just to console himself."

"He made a dozen winnings. And I've helped him to a job as warehouse clerk at Samarai, when he wore no shirt under his coat, and gunny-bags for trousers. That's what the Cap'n here means by his luck, I fancy, because you couldn't keep him down. Capitalist, miner, politician, stevedore—it was all one to Jimmie. Look how he bought up the *Creswick*, that nobody else would touch, when she went ashore on Turn-again Island, cleared fifteen thou. off her by the nerviest kind of work, and dropped it all on the next Melbourne Cup. Little he cared. He was havin' his own way with life—as you say, Cap'n Bartlet."

But Jeckol frowned and pursed his thin lips.

"He—he never saw the game that was too big for him," said Harris, "nor held back his smile nor his fist."

"Darlinghurst Gaol is full of the same sort," said Jeckol dryly.

"You ask what he was like?" Cap'n Bartlet swung around beside the wheel. "I'll tell you. I'm married to a girl that was pretty chief with Jim Albro once. There's no living man dare stand and say a word agen' my wife—the finest in Queensland, sir—but I knew all the talk when I married her. And yet you see me here."

"With an entirely friendly purpose?" queried Jeckol, peering at him. "Not to make sure that he won't come back?"

I saw the colour flood to Bartlet's rugged cheek and ebb again.

"In friendship," he answered simply.

Jeckol made a gesture like a salute, with a glint of mockery, perhaps, but he said nothing more. And we others said rather less. Bartlet brought the schooner about on her heel and laid her square through the gap, and we turned once more to that sinister bay, opening before us like the painted depth of a stage set, whereon we were now to discover and reconstruct our obscure tragedy.

We drew a quick curtain on it, for we were hardly past the first headland, when one of the brown, breech-clouted sailors leapt up forward and directed our startled attention to the wreck of the *Timothy S.* There could be no manner of doubt—a green hull with a black water-line, bedded low and on her side, hatches awash, just behind a shallow jag of the shore well away to leeward. We needed no glasses to name her, or to see that nothing remained of life or value to reward our search. She lay in her last berth, in the final stage of naval decay, pitifully battered, stripped to the shreds of rigging, her masts broken short and bare as bleached bones, and from her whitened rail rose up a flight of boobies that cried like shrill, mournful ghosts and vanished.

"Aye, that's the end of their pearlin' cruise," said Peters grimly. "That's Mull-hall's craft, sure enough. The south-west gales would drive her there. She must ha' been anchored just about where we're passin' now, and I shouldn't wonder."

"On the shell-bed?" cried Jeckol, leaning to squint down into the sparkling blue.

"Fair under our keel, I'd say."

At a signal the leadsman had flown his pigeon again, though we were well past all reefs.

"Twenty-two fathom!" Harris echoed the cry. "That's diving. I heard it was a deep-water bed. D'you suppose they were at it when the niggers jumped 'em?"

"I figger they were," said Peters. "See that scrubby bit of island? The point's not a hundred yards away. A dozen canoes could mass up behind there and never be noticed. By Joe, it's plain as paint! The ship snugged down for business, the diver below, pumps and tackle goin', all hands busy on board, and the watch calculatin' profits to three decimals behind the windlass. Aye, there's your treasure-hunter, every time! Then perhaps a slant of wind

settin' around that point to give the raid a runnin' start, and——"

"Him finish," concluded Harris briefly. "All over in ten minutes. They'd hardly know what hit 'em. A black cloud, that's all—a black cloud."

Plain, Peters called it, and he was right—it was too plain. None of us but had heard tales enough, and stark history enough, of these blood-stained barriers that hedge the true Unknown Continent. To our waiting minds, sensitised by suspense, his few phrases threw a vivid picture of the careless ship, the stalking death, and the swift horror that must have followed. There lay the wreck and there the empty bay. The rest we could fill in for ourselves.

"Then what are we doing here?" asked Jeckol at last.

Peters was already dealing out rifles and ammunition by the deck-house, and Bartlet, looking drawn and old, did not seem to hear; but Harris jerked an answer over his shoulder with the flippancy of emotion.

"Oh, you can't tell. We might find some smoked heads to bring away."

A few minutes later the Cap'n was giving him his last instructions while we of the shore party dropped to our places in the big whale-boat.

"You're not to follow us in, whatever happens—mind that. If you sight more'n three canoes at a time, knock out the shackles and run for open sea. I'm leaving you Obadiah—he's a goodish shot—and four of the best boys."

The young mate nodded. He hated not coming with us, but Bartlet knew. This was Papua, where wise men take no chance, and fools seldom live long enough to take a second.

We took none ourselves, as we rowed slowly shoreward and sheered off out of spear-throw, watching the wall of jungle. There is no beach inside Barange, only the mangrove roots that writhe down to the water's edge like tangled pythons through the oozy banks of salt marsh. It was very still and very clear in the afternoon sunlight, though the heat pouring out over us seemed the exhalation of a great steam bath choked with stewing vegetation. Now and then our crew of clean-limbed Tonga boys rested on their oars, with timid, limpid gaze turned askance. We heard their quick breathing and the drip from the oar-blades—nothing else. At such times we floated in a mirage where each leaf and frond and twisted liana with its mirrored image had an unnatural brilliance and precision, as in a laboured canvas or a view seen through a stereoscope.

And there stole upon us again the oppressive solicitation of the land, subtle and perilous. Behind the beauty and wonder of it, beyond those bright shores and the first low foot-hills of the range—what? Nobody knows. That is the charm and the lure. Nobody can know. Peoples, religions, empires, untouched since the birth of time, fabulous wealth and fabled marvel, mountains of gold, cliffs of ruby, "cataracts of adamant," any exaggeration that fantasy cares to dream. They may be. No man has ever come back to deny them. They must be. Why else should the sphinx smile?

"I suppose a hundred black devils are watching us now," whispered Jeckol suddenly. "Why don't they show themselves?" He fiddled nervously with his rifle and sniffed. "What a place! This air is deadly—rotten with fever, too. Faugh! It's animal! It's like—it's breathing down a tiger's throat!"

I blinked at the little chap, and with the same glance was aware of Peters standing up in the bow, lighting a short-fused stick of dynamite from his cigar. Before I could cry murder he had pitched it in and shot the bush.

It struck with the smash of all calamity in that utter quiet. The trees sprang toward us and the roar rolled back from angry hills. Like a multi-coloured dust of the explosion, burst a myriad of screaming birds—lories, parroquets, kingfishers—flashing motes of green and blue and scarlet in the sunshine. But they dwindled and passed. The echoes died. The smoke drifted away, and the bush closed up without a scar. The hush engulfed us once more, floating there, futile invaders who assaulted eternity with a squib.

"They don't seem to care much," giggled Jeckol.

But Bartlet raised a finger. Far away in the wood something stirred. It drew nearer, with long pauses, pressing on, and at last charging recklessly through the undergrowth. We had the spot covered from half a dozen rifles as there broke out at the verge a creature that leapt and clung among the creepers.

"Mahrster!" it cried, imploring. "Mahrster!"

A man, though more like a naked, starving ape, with his knobby joints and

the bones in a rack under his black skin, and shaken now by the ecstasy of terror. Not at us. He faced the guns without wincing. His beady eyes kept coasting behind him the way he had come, as if he looked to see a dreadful hand reach from the thicket and pluck him back. The jungle, the land, was what he feared.

"Mahrster," he gasped, "you take'm me that fella boat along you! One fella ship-boy me—good fella too much!"

"What name?" challenged Peters. "What fella ship?"

From the chattered reply we caught a startling word.

"By Joe, he's one of their boys! Give way, Cap'n!"

We edged in until Peters could yank the quaking bundle aboard and pulled again to safety from the mangrove shadow, while the fugitive stammered his story in broken *bêche de mer*.

It was true—we had found a survivor from the lost *Timothy S.* Kakwe, he called himself, and he had come to Barange "long time before altogether." Two months at least, we judged. In the attack on the schooner he had escaped by swimming. Himself a Papuan, of a very different tribe and region, he had taken to the tree-tops after the fashion of his own people, the painted monkey-folk of Princess Marianne Straits—a facility to which he owed his life, it appeared, for he had since lived on fruits and nuts among the cockatoos, undiscovered.

This much we gathered from his gabble before Peters caught him.

"But the others—them white fella mahrster?"

"All finish," said Kakwe bluntly.

"How?" cried Peters.

"No savee, me. Too much fright—walk along salt water—get to hell along beach, along tree. Me fright like hell."

His account tallied with our own theory of the massacre, but he had seen no bodies brought ashore, could not identify the murderers, could not say where the native village lay or how to reach it, would not guide anyone into that bush on any consideration. For the rest, this was a "good fella place" to get away from quickly.

"Ah," said Jeckol, "and that's a true word."

So, indeed, it seemed, and it is curious to think how close we were to giving up then. Aye, we were that close. We drifted out toward the anchorage and looked helplessly around us. The place was so huge, so baffling. Hopeless to search farther among empty swamps and forests, to grope at large in this hushed wilderness, to coerce a jungle. The cruisers that have bombarded these same coasts on many a punitive expedition have learned how hopeless—against Papua, who keeps her secrets.

We must have been half-way back to the *Aurora Bird* when Bartlet, sitting thoughtful in the stern, made the sign that brought us up all sharp.

"He's lying," he said quietly.

Jeckol's nerves jumped in protest.

"Eh, what? The black? He's only scared half to death. You wouldn't blame him for wanting to get out of this trap, would you? I do myself."

"He couldn't have lived overhead the whole nest o' them all this time without learning something," declared Bartlet.

"Why should he lie?"

But Peters had risen to snatch around that wizened ape face, blank as a mummy's—his own was alight.

"By Joe, and a timely reminder. When you've got to ask why a Papuan nigger should lie, you've gone pretty wide! As for scare, what d'y' suppose he must ha' seen to scare him so?"

Here he bent our monkey man over athwart and introduced him affectionately to the Webley.

"You fella Kakwe," he said, "my survivin' jewel—I forgot your breed. I should ha' begun by bang'm black head b'long you. Now, don't stop to gammon. Whatever you're holdin' back you *show*—savee! S'pose you no showm' straight, me finish 'long you close up altogether!"

And Kakwe showed. Dominated by superior wickedness, with all the black man's docility under the instant threat, he collapsed quite simply at the touch of steel, and he showed the nook where a tiny hidden creek flowed down among the mangroves, the winding course that led by the swamp's edge through dank and darksome channels to a trodden mud-bank and Barange village itself, tucked away there like a huddle of giant hives in a back lot. This time we paused for no manœuvring. Even Jeckol grabbed a boat-hook, and we pushed through, eager to strike on a definite lead at last.

Though we might have saved our energy, for the wild had its surprise in waiting. The village was silent, deserted, tenantless.

We landed at the square, to call it so, a rude clearing on which the few houses faced,



"'They dropped on their faces, and I saw I was elected.'"

those sprawling, spacious communal dwellings—palaces among huts—that sometimes amaze the explorer along the west coast. None opposed us. Nothing moved, not so much as a curl of smoke. An insect hummed in the sun like a bullet, and I take no shame to say I ducked. But that was all. And when the grovelling Kakwe led us to a wide platform that ran breast-high across the front of the largest house, we stood with rifles propped and quickened pulses, staring stupidly at the thing we had come this far to find.

Only a box, lying on the middle of the platform, under the shadow of the lofty thatch. A small brass-bound chest such as sailormen love and ships carry everywhere.

"Loot!" snorted Jeckol. "Well?"

But Cap'n Bartlet had laid hold of another trove, a coil of ringed rubber tubing, neatly disposed about the chest.

"What's there?"

"A diver's air-pipe," stated the Cap'n.

"What about it?"

"It's been cut, top and bottom."

We crowded for a look, and I saw his tanned fist shake ever so slightly.

"A diver's pipe," he repeated. "A diver, d'you see? They had a diver, and, according to your notion, Peters——" He drew a slow breath. "What—what if that there diver happened to be overboard at the minute the rush came?"

And then the voice of Peters, cool and drawling—

"Someone's left a message on the box."

As we spun around, he turned it over a-tilt, so that all might see the bold letters, scarred in lead, of that laconic legend—all but Bartlet, who fumbled for his spectacles.

"Writ' with a Snider bullet, I take it," continued the trader. "One of them soft-nose kind as supplied to heathen parts for a blessin' of civilisation."

"Read it, can't you?" begged the Cap'n. And this was the notice Jeckol read:—

†

The Crew of the Schooner *Timothy S.* of
Cooktown,
that tried a cast with fortune
and turned a deuce
Barange Bay,
Jan. 22, 19—

J. Mullhall, master	Bamba, Koho
B. Smythe, mate	Kakwe, Jack-Jack
Henry New	Menomie, Frank

Hic finis fandi.

†

Cap'n Bartlet removed his hat and wiped away a stream of sweat with deliberate care and a red-barred kerchief.

"Sounds natural," he observed, clearing his throat a little, "though I never did make much of that 'hic' language."

"It means 'here ended the talk,' or something of the kind," explained Jeckol. "But still, you know," he added sharply, "the list isn't complete. Where's your friend Albro?"

Peters rolled the white of an eye on him.

"Is it your fancy," he inquired, "that the niggers have the habit of writin' epitaphs? Or books?"

He held up to our astonished gaze the object he had found on lifting the lid of the box—a packet of thin bark strips covered with coarse markings and bound with a twist of fibre, which now he unknotted, to run the leaves over in his hand.

"I knew he was alive," said Cap'n Bartlet simply.

And that was the way we won to the story of Jim Albro. Even now I can recall each tone and gesture of the telling, with each detail of the group we made there in empty Barange village—the trader's drawl and check as he read a line from the diary or turned to Kakwe with a question, or flung in some vivid comment of his own; the strained attention on Bartlet's earnest face; the incredulous sniff and squint of little Jeckol, still unsubdued, fidgeting about; the statuesque brown bodies of our Tonga boys as they stood leaning patiently on their rifles, awaiting the master's next whim; the massed ring of the jungle; the odd high-peaked houses with their cavernous fronts, that seemed to listen while they gaped and grinned upon us; the lances of sunlight that began to splinter and fall out among lengthening shadows across the open; and through it all and over it all the heat and the smell and the brooding, ominous, inscrutable mystery of Papua.

"*Seeking wealth, I found glory. I went below as an amateur diver, and I came up a professional god. But I wish I could find which son of a night-hawk it was that cut*

my pipe. I'd excommunicate him on the altar."

This is a page from the Book of Jim Albro, and it shows him as he lived. Later entries are not so clear, not by any means so sprightly, and some are pitiful enough in all truth. It must have been set down in the early hours of his reign, while he was still in the flush of his stupendous adventure, before he had begun to understand what lay ahead. But here was the man "with an eye like a blue glass marble," that "never held his fist or his smile." No other could have written it after the events he had survived.

Just as Peters inferred to have been the case, the attack on the *Timothy S.* caught the whole crew of pearl-hunters unready. They had seen no natives at Barange, they kept no look-out, and when Albro stepped off the ladder that morning of January 22, he left his shipmates contentedly employed on deck. He never saw any of them again, or—what might have been a different matter—even part of them. He went down to the shell-bed, and while he was there the black raiders made their sweep of the schooner.

It is likely the savages mistook the diving-lines for an extra mooring—it is certain they knew nothing whatever about the apparatus—and Albro's first warning was the cutting of that air-pipe, when he found his pressure gone and water trickling through the inlet valve. Fortunately, he was just preparing to ascend, and had tightened his outlet to inflate the suit. Fortunately, too, his helmet was furnished with an adjustable inlet, and he was able hastily to close both valves.

He tugged at his life-line, but it drew loose in his hand. He turned over on his side to look upward, but he could see nothing—only the vague blue twilight through which the slack coils of his severed air-pipe came sagging. Then he knew that he had been cut off, and the hideous fear that lies in wait for every diver amid the perils and loneliness of the sea-bottom seized upon him. He might have popped to the surface by throwing off his forty-pound weights, but he was aware that no chance accident could have served him so, and his impulse was to get away from schooner and all to shore. Under water he had some few minutes to live—perhaps four or five—as long as the enclosed air should last him. Frantically he began to struggle toward the beach, yielding to a moment's panic that was to cost him dear. While trying blindly to slash free the useless pipe, he lost his diver's knife.

The rotten coral burst and sank under footing. Clogging weeds enwreathed and held him back with evil embrace. A tridacna spread its jaws before his steps, so that he nearly plunged into that deadly spring-trap of the deep. But he kept on up the slope. His keen spirit rallied and bore him through, and he came surging from the waves at last on a point of rocks outside the bay, where he could cling and open the emergency cock in the helmet. The suit deflated, and he breathed new life. But here he suffered his second immediate mishap, for, as he scrambled to his feet, a dizziness took him, and he slipped and pitched forward heavily, and with a great clang of armour the god fell fainting at the very threshold of his world.

"*Broke my right arm getting ashore. Walking the beach when I met the niggers. They dropped on their faces, and I saw I was elected.*"

These are the words with which Jim Albro chooses to make his note of a scene that can scarcely have had its parallel in human experience. With two dozen words, no more. You figure him there, I hope, that muffled Colossus, with his huge copper helm flashing red and his monstrous cyclopean eye agleam, striding along the strip of white beach against the hostile green hills of Papua. You see him break, an incredible apparition of power and majesty, upon the view of the dusky cannibal folk and stand towering over their stricken ranks, triumphant. A glimpse as through the flick of a shutter that passes and leaves the beholder dazzled and unsatisfied. But the whole record is only a series of such glimpses, some focussed with startling lucidity, some clouded and confused, and all too brief.

One other bit remains to fix the picture—an inimitable splash of colour.

"*I picked out the chief devil-devil doctor,*" says Albro, "*and raised him to honour. Old Gum-eye. Friend of mine.*"

Mark the cleverness of the man. Whole chapters could supply no clearer tribute to his resilience and entire adequacy. Unerringly he took the right course to enforce the *rôle* thus amazingly thrust upon him, and to establish his god-head. Already he had caught up the situation, had put its shock and terror behind him. The inscription on the box remains his only reference

to the loss of the schooner and the fate of her crew. And while this might seem merely indifference or a lack of sensibility in another, I cannot feel it was so with Albro. His was a nature essentially epideictic, prompt to the play of circumstance. The thing was done and past crying over, the blacks had acted by their lights, and he had now to act by his. And well he filled the part. By evening he had been installed in some kind of temple as accredited deity and ruler over the Barange tribes.

Here ends the first part of the Book, so far as it is possible to arrange the entries, unnumbered and badly mixed as they are. I incline to think he must have got hold of the Snider cartridge and the bark-strips to begin his writing that same night, while he still had some measure of liberty. Perhaps he foresaw even then that he would want to leave a memorial. Perhaps he simply sought a means of beguiling the long hours and the pain of his broken arm. I always imagine him jotting those early notes by the flare of a guttering torch while he squatted above the altar and the devil-doctors slept around his sanctuary.

In any case, there is no doubt about the time of the following spurted item :—

"*Forty hours of this. Am growing weaker. My arm* —— (word scratched out). *Had to give up trying to start the glass in my helmet. Can't budge it.*"

And soon afterward occurs another passage in the same startlingly altered key :—

"*Tried to get away this* (morning ?), *but the priests too suspicious. I wanted to try smashing the glass on a rock. Likely would have burst my ear-drums, anyway*——"

And further :—

"*If I could get hold of a knife for three minutes. Bamboo stick*—(part illegible here) *—can't tear vulcan—canvas. No use.*"

When Peters read those lines and looked up, he confronted a sickly lot of auditors.

"Good Heavens!" breathed Bartlet. "He couldn't get out!"

The knowledge of Albro's actual plight crashed upon us all in just that phrase, and I leave you to gauge its impact. We had had no hint of it. Here was the diary before us. We were only waiting to learn the ultimate triumph of the diarist. Indeed, our whole attitude toward the singular discovery we were making had been quite cheerful, even exultant, like that of children who follow the tribulations of some favourite hero, secure of the happy solution.

"Couldn't get *out?*" squeaked Jeckol. "How do you mean—he couldn't?"

"He was locked up in that blasted diving-dress!"

"Locked up?"

"Sewed up—sacked up," said Peters heavily. "Did you ever see the stuff? He calls it canvas, which it ain't, but tanned twill—two-ply, with rubber between. He can't tear his way out with a stick, he says. And small wonder. Talk about strait-jackets!"

"But—but why doesn't he take off the helmet?"

Peters stared unseeing at the leaves in his hand, and his face was saturnine.

"By Joe, what a mess!" he murmured. "What a mess! Look here, d'y' know a diver's outfit? First, he wears a solid breastplate—see?—that sets about his shoulders. Then the helmet fits on that with segmental neck-rings, and screws hard down with a quarter-turn to a catch. Aye, there's a catch to snap it home. And where is that catch? Why, at the *back!* No diver was ever intended to take off his own helmet."

We could only blink at him dumbly.

"Albro couldn't reach it. Of course, if he should manage to rip away the cloth from the eyelets, he'd be all right—he'd simply shift the whole upper works. But them eyelets, now, they lock down all around with thumb-screws through a vulcanised collar."

"The glass?"

Peters thrust the packet at him.

"What does he say himself? There's only one removable glass to a helmet, and that's in front—an inch thick and screws tight in a gunmetal socket. And, worse, it's guarded with a gridiron of bars—same as the two side-glasses, which are fixed. He wants to break it, but he can't. He wants to unscrew it, but he can't. Do you see him—by Joe!—do you see him a-twistin' and a-fightin' for his life in there, *with only one good arm?*"

"Why," cried Jeckol, in sudden appalled perception, "he couldn't even eat! He's starving inside that suit!"

"Starving?" echoed Bartlet from colourless lips. "Heavens, if that was all! He's dying of thirst by the inches!"

I do not know how it struck Jeckol, but it seemed to me as if a blackness came in upon the sun.

"Go on," urged Bartlet, "go on!"

But it was not so easy to go on. Peters

found whole pages of the Book impossible to decipher. At places it lapsed to a mere jumble of sprawling characters. Again the soft lead was hopelessly blurred over, where the pages had been often thumbed or, perhaps, crumpled and thrown aside. He ruffled them hastily, and we hung upon his search.

"... *uneasy god. They got me tied up now to keep me safe* ... (words missing) ... *joke, to pass out here like a rat under a bell-jar. Not me. I don't mean to.*"

Curious. When Peters resumed the thread, when he read that eloquent line, those of us who had known Jim Albro exchanged glances and nodded solemnly at one another with an indefinable thrill. For this was the man's real triumph—and we felt it then, regardless of the outcome—that alone, beyond any conceivable aid for the first time in his life, speechless, helpless, at the end of all those amiable arts which had given him his way so often with men and devils, Jim Albro was still the same Jim Albro "that you couldn't keep down."

His body was consuming and shrivelling with its own heat. He had to scheme for each scant breath he drew, spreading the dress and collapsing it at short intervals to renew the foul air. He had to view the tempting tribute laid out before the altar, juicy mangoes and figs and sugar-cane, wild berries and young drinking coco-nuts, freshly opened, with the new, cool milk frothing up at the brim. He had to receive the homage of a people, and to count by the wheeling sun how many hours of torment were left him. Worse than all, he had to withstand the pitiless irony of it, the derisive grin of Fate that drives men mad. He did these things, and he would not yield. He did not mean to. And lest you should think the phrase a mere flourish, observe the testimony of the Book.

The tribes flocked in that second day to do him honour. There was a great gathering in the square. Some vivid pantomime was displayed before the high seat. Some unusual rites were enacted before the temple, when the bamboo pipes and drums were going and the doctors wore their vermilion mop wigs and masks of ceremony, and chains of naked dancers were stamping and circling to the chant. Jim Albro watched and noted it all behind his solid inch of plate glass, not passively, not indifferently, but with close attention and the very liveliest interest. Aye, this god took an interest in the welfare of his people!

Heaven knows what he saw in the Papuans of Barange. By all accounts they are a plum-black race of rather superior ferocity, six feet is their medium stature, and their favourite dish a human ear, nicely broiled. So the old traders report, and never an explorer has improved the description. It required someone who could sit down among them without losing his head—quite literally—to learn more. Albro filled the bill. He had nothing to do but to sit. And while he sat he busied himself with the thoughts that have made the strangest and the blindest reading in the diary.

"*A prime lot of raw material. Why* (do?) *people always lie about niggers? Unspoiled* ... (part illegible) ... *the makings. Their orators told me in dumb show* ... (words missing) ... *behind the hills* ... (lines missing) ... *Wonderful!*"

Wonderful, he says. Wonderful what? Chances, perhaps, opportunities, possibilities. Certainly nobody else ever had such as lay before Jim Albro if he could have won free to take them, as a conqueror, as a god. Was he dreaming even then of empire? Had he had a glimpse into the meaning of Papua that struck fire to his roving and restless soul? Had he fallen enamoured of the sphinx, and had she drawn the veil for him? It may be. The fact stands that, fevered and tortured as he was, burning with thirst and pain, he discovered something capable of rousing that cry from him. We hear the cry, and that is all we hear—very nearly.

"*I could do it. Am going to trust old Gum-eye* ..."

Peters looked up from the last page.

"Well?" said Jeckol impatiently.

"That's the end," announced Peters.

I cannot say what the breathless group of us had been expecting. Possibly the first-hand memoir of a miracle would have satisfied us, or the harrowing confessions and last wishes of the moribund. But so natural and unfanciful a thing as a full-stop to the tension left us stupefied. We felt aggrieved, too, as if the author should have postponed his business long enough to let us know whether he was dead or not.

"It can't be!" cried Jeckol, all abroad. "How could it end there? What happened to him? Where is he?"

Peters swung his gaze around the vacant clearing and the impenetrable palisade of the forest.

"This was written three months ago, remember," he said.

"But he had a plan," insisted Jeckol. "He surely had a plan. He says he was going to do something. He'd found a friend he could trust. What next?"

"The friend must ha' failed him."

Cap'n Bartlet shook himself like one awaking.

"No friend would have failed him," he said deliberately. "And—you're forgetting that ship-boy again."

Once more, with a rattled oath, Peters pounced on the unfortunate Kakwe quailing beside him. Once more he brought to bear the persuasion he best knew how to use, and once more the black boy submitted wholly and showed. He had nothing to tell. He could throw no light on events. But he had seen from the trees where the "white fella mahrster him diver" forgathered with all the fiends of the pit, whereat he was "too much fright," and he showed us this time up the platform of the identical wide-thatched house by which we had been standing. We crept in through the low entrance and across a floor of sagging bamboo mats, and found ourselves before a curtain of pandanus that hung midway. We were long past astonishment, but Jeckol, arresting a gesture, dropped his hand.

"I daren't," he whimpered.

It was Bartlet who put the curtain aside.

And there, in the twilight of the place, we saw the god as he had appeared in his recent earthly phase. His great copper head gleamed at the back of a shallow niche, made fast against the wall. The muffled, stiff clumsiness of his diving-dress revealed a heroic figure, still disposed in the attitude of a sitting Buddha, with the leaden-soled diving shoes thrust out by either knee. His single huge eye glared down at us balefully from over the altar as we stood, overwhelmed in the presence.

"And so he did—pass out," said Jackol.

Something had caught the quick eye of Peters. Horrified, we saw him step forward and lay a vigorous and sacrilegious hold on that high divinity, saw the shape start and tremble as with life, saw it shake and flutter like a bundle of rags in the wind, and flap—emptily.

"Yes," said Peters. "He's passed out, right enough. Leastways, from here. Passed out and on. And quite easy, too. Look at these slits—would you?"

The diving-suit had been laid open like a stripped pelt with long cuts of a keen blade, one down the middle of the back, one across the shoulders, and others connected along the inside of each limb to the wrists and ankles.

"Gone!"

"Gone," confirmed Peters. "Whether the niggers dug him from it piece by piece like the kernel from a nut, or whether that friend of his helped him to shed complete—you can take your choice. In either case, he's gone—and gone this time to stay."

"There's no—no blood," gasped Jeckol, "anyhow!"

Cap'n Bartlet had removed his hat to polish his shiny forehead with the colourful kerchief, and he was looking out of the door over the tops of the trees to the far blue and nameless mountains of Papua with an eye at peace.

"You could always bank on the luck of James O'Shaughnessy Albro," he said simply. "I knew he was alive."

But Jeckol was still reeling.

"I sha'n't write this yarn," he assured us earnestly. "It's too—it's too—and, besides, there's no end to it."

"*Hic finis fandi!*" suggested Peters.

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

By WALTER E. GROGAN

ILLUSTRATED BY OSCAR WILSON

THE spring twilight, filtered through the muslin-shrouded window of the parlour, gave them all the light they wanted. He had both hands upon her shoulders and was gazing down into her eyes, shining with a new light. Both hearts were beating quickly. Red-gold hair, deep violet eyes, little oval face with the up-tilted chin, he wanted no great light for these. In the twilight it was as clear to him as in broadest day, or in darkness—the beautiful small girl's face that had made so great a difference in his life. And she, looking up, was shyly glad of the half-light. This big good-looking boy was hers, and her heart sang.

"It's just wonderful," he said.

"Wonderful!" she echoed.

"I thought," he laughed, "but I was not sure. I used to have awful fears that perhaps——"

"Stupid boy!"

"Yes, that's all right now. It's all jolly and sweet and comfy. But, after all, there are so many chaps in the world. And that I should be *the* one! It seemed too good to believe until I knew. Now——" He stooped quickly and kissed her lips. "I've had luck all my life," he added, "and this is the crown of it all."

They sat talking—he held her hand—uttering short half sentences, examining their new-found joy, tasting it, delighting in it, using the same old foolish formulæ with the zest that, thank God, is ever new and never stales.

Then quite suddenly she remembered Frank's father, the self-important, middle-aged head of the great boot factory that was Marston's chief industry; a hard, self-made, ambitious man. She knew his reputation in Marston. The town hummed with stories about him, his keenness, his meanness, his way of handling men, his pushing, shouldering manner. He was a great figure in the little town. How would he welcome her? Even in the twilight the little parlour emphasised her poverty. She could see the square shadow of the card that hung in the window: "Miss Medhurst. Typewriting. Lessons Given."

"What will Sir Thomas say?" she asked. Framed in words, the question was more formidable. What could he say but storm and sweep the suggestion aside? Her heart stilled at the thought, grew heavy, cold. So much to give up! All her life she had been making sacrifices.

"The guv'nor?" Frank smiled at her. "He'll do the heavy father at first, of course. Bluster and 'I always hoped you'd do better, my lad.' As though it were possible!" He broke off to kiss her fingers. "But he'll come round. I always get my own way. It's an advantage being an only child."

"Oh, Frank, if it should be all a mistake—a mistake my loving you, a mistake your loving me! If it should bring you harm! If it should be the cause of a quarrel between your father and you! I am afraid, Frank. I seem like a child in the dark. Perhaps it would be better to end it now?" Her voice quivered over her offer of self-sacrifice.

"That is all nonsense," he declared masterfully. He came behind her chair and tilted back her head until he could reach over and kiss her lips. "There is no going back now. Unless you have made a mistake and have found out that you do not care!" He laughed happily.

"Oh, Frank!" she murmured. It was a very convincing murmur.

"Of course you haven't. You know that you care enormously, almost half as much as I do. Don't you worry your pretty head. I shall manage the guv'nor all right. When

he sees how much it matters to me, he is bound to give way. Why, he'd give me his head, if he could, dear old chap! But, Vi, I ought to speak to your father."

"My dear"—you cannot imagine how caressing that endearment sounded upon her pretty lips; Frank had to stoop again and interrupt her—"what is the use? Dad wouldn't understand. He is living in another world—he has no interest outside that shed at the back he calls his workshop. I don't think he realises that there is anything beyond. He listens to what I have to say, but he takes no notice. His eyes are vacant; you can see that his mind is always on the work he is doing. Poor old dad!" She sighed, and, rising, lit a lamp and pulled down the blind. The little room leapt into ugly prominence—the little room so well kept and so little deserving of the care bestowed. Frank, glancing round, thought of the surroundings he would give her, and smiled happily.

As Violet busied herself, a heavy step sounded in the narrow passage outside. The door was pushed open roughly and a man entered. He was tall and gaunt and stooped. He was without his jacket, and his uncollared shirt was open at the throat. His long, lean, nervous hands were stained, and the nails were blunt and square. The thick mat of longish unkempt hair was iron-grey, and from underneath deeply-set dark eyes peered out, burning with a fierce inward light. Strange eyes they were, for with all their fire they were unnoticing.

"Oil, Violet," he said. His voice was the voice of a sleep-walker, low, toneless, rather harsh. "The lamp is burning low, and this can is empty."

Violet went up to him without a word, took the empty can, and hurried into the kitchen.

"Mr. Medhurst——" Frank commenced, but the man, without a glance in his direction, followed his daughter with eager footsteps that seemed to push rather than shuffle.

Presently Violet returned.

"You saw, dear?" she said. "I doubt whether he knew you were here. Nothing outside his work-shed is real to him in these moods." She sighed again. "I wish he would give up trying."

"He—he is working on some invention?" Frank knew this hazily. Medhurst was rather a character in Marston. The majority of the townsfolk called him "Mad Medhurst." He had been an engineer in the big boot works, but had quarrelled with Frank's father—a quarrel which had resulted in summary dismissal. The death of Mrs. Medhurst followed. For a few years Medhurst had drifted from one engagement to another. He was a clever enough workman, but from time to time he would absent himself from his employment quite suddenly. Those absences were spent in wrestling with ideas that never fructified. Two years before an uncle, dying, left him a small income—a little more than a hundred a year—since when he had made fewer attempts at employment, and had kept it, when obtained, for less and less time.

"Yes, it never comes to anything. He spends so much, too, on tools and materials." She smiled rather sadly at Frank. "I would not grudge that, if he were happy, Frank. But you saw him. He looks—like the shell of a man. He is dead, away from his invention. He wears himself out body and brain. He does with so little sleep that I am frightened, and he grudges the time for meals. And then there comes a day when he realises that he has been working for nothing—that all his hopes have been false. It is terrible then. He is no longer dead, but alive to all the torments of lost hope and remorse for my sake. Poor, poor old dad!"

Frank broached the subject of his engagement the very next morning. He chose, as he thought, a propitious moment. Sir Thomas, breakfasted and beaming over an evidently satisfactory post, had given pointed criticism on the latest enormity of the Government, and Frank had diplomatically hummed assent. But, however propitious the chosen moment, the result was disastrous.

"Engaged? You? To a penniless nobody? Absurd! I have other plans for you."

"That makes no difference, sir," Frank replied firmly. "I have chosen. If you would only see Violet——"

"The daughter of a discharged servant! You'd like me to crave the honour of an alliance for my son, I suppose? I won't hear of it. That's an end to it. There's no more to be said. Be reasonable, Frank."

"I am, sir. It is you who are not."

"Fudge! You are not the first young ass to be caught by a clever, designing pauper. You'll thank me later. Why, the father drinks, I believe."

"That is a lie!" Frank faced his father with a flushed face.

"I won't have that language from you, sir!" Sir Thomas thundered. "But whether he drinks, or whether he doesn't, is beside the question. I won't listen to your absurd proposition. That's final. I haven't built up a huge business, a fine business, for you, to have you marrying a nobody, a workgirl, a worthless——"

"I warn you, father, I will not listen to you unless you speak respectfully of the woman I love."

"Respectfully! Pshaw! A girl I send odd jobs of typing to!"

"The woman I am going to marry." Frank spoke more quietly, but his blue eyes had hardened. For a moment Sir Thomas was on the verge of a furious outburst. The veins of his neck swelled, his face was suffused, his eyes glared. With a visible effort he regained command of himself.

"Look here, Frank, let us talk this thing over quietly. No, not a word from you yet. I have been a good father to you. I have done a great deal for you. I have worked hard—confoundedly hard—I have slaved, actually slaved, to build up a big concern for you. You have had all the advantages of money—education, travel, everything. There has not been a single wish of yours I have not gratified——"

"Only this—the most important of my life," Frank broke in.

"Don't, Frank! I am trying to—to put things as calmly as I can. . . . Look at me. I have a position here in Marston. I *am* Marston, more or less. Well, I've done all that myself. And I'm hanged if I've done it for you to hand over everything to a beggar girl——"

"I warn you, sir!" Frank exclaimed.

"Be silent! I hoped you'd marry a lady."

"I hope so, too," Frank replied quietly.

"That girl—a typewriting girl—a workgirl!" His contempt was bitter.

"A lady, sir."

"You fool—you bemused fool! You are enough to make me lose my temper. Look here, they've made me a knight. I'll be a baronet in a couple of years, you see. That's a little to hand on, Frank. You've got to think of that. I've made you fit for any society. I want you to—to marry into the right sort of family. I—I am proud of you. I want to see you climb higher than I have, and I haven't done so bad."

"I aim at the best in life, and that, I take it, is to be happy," Frank said.

"Happy!" Sir Thomas snorted. "Nice sort of happiness you are contemplating! You'd be ashamed of her in a couple of years."

"Never!" Frank declared.

"I know. I've seen it happen. Over and over again. A pretty face, and a weight all your life dragging you down. That's the size of it. Who is his wife? That typewriter girl, daughter of old Mad Medhurst. Then they'd snigger. You know the sort of caddle that goes on. Then you're out of the hunt. You could carry on the business, yes—if you had it. Mind you that, Frank, if you had it. But you'd go no higher. With the right sort of wife, right sort of family connection to give you a proper footing, you'd go far."

"I have no ambition that way," Frank replied. "I am content to follow in your footsteps, father. The business is good enough for me."

"I dare say." Sir Thomas pulled at his collar as though it had grown suddenly tight. "If you had it."

"What exactly do you mean, father?" Frank had grown pale, but a fighting light had come into his blue eyes.

"Say you are not in earnest, Frank! It is the ruin of all my hopes and ambitions for you."

"I am in earnest." The son spoke steadily.

"You choose this designing girl in preference to me—the father who has slaved for you?"

"If it comes to a choice"—his head went up and his jaw grew squarer—"I choose the woman I love."

"You owe something to me."

"More to her, sir. I have gained her love."

"That's easy with my bank-book!" Sir Thomas scoffed.

"I have gained her love," Frank repeated. "I owe it to her and to the love she has given to me to be faithful."

"Then be faithful"—the storm burst—"in a garret! Go and live in the gutter! Try how life is from her standpoint. Starve! You shall have no money of mine. I did not make my money in order to pamper paupers! You're no son of mine—I've done with you! That's final. Get out!" He turned and stumped furiously to the door.

"I will," Frank answered. He stood motionless for a few minutes in the empty room. He had not been prepared for this. There was no mistaking the finality of his father's decision. He knew him for an

obstinate man, although hitherto that side of his character had not been shown to him. Now he recognised that it had been shown, and shown very clearly. He was quite sure that his father would hold fast to his resolution. Frank's square, determined jaw came into prominence. *He* was obstinate, too. *He* was firm, too, when there was anything worth the effort. And Violet was worth it—by Heaven, she was!

He went straight to the little mean house of the Medhursts and told Violet his father's attitude, smoothing nothing. He was wrong, he owned, when he said he would cajole Sir Thomas. In such a mood his father was unreasonable. Violet lifted a white face to him.

"Then we must part, Frank," she said bravely. "I can't bring poverty to the man I love."

"Part!" He pulled her roughly to him. "That's impossible. You are you. You are necessary to me."

"But poverty, Frank?"

"Which would you choose if our positions were reversed? Don't answer. I know. You'd come to me. I am conceited enough to know that, generous enough to believe in the strength of your love. You see? Well, think that I am—not so much meaner than you."

"Frank, I did not think for one moment——"

"Of course you didn't. Women don't think. They just jump at any idea of sacrificing themselves for the one they love, and never question whether the sacrifice is acceptable. You know what life for you would be without me. Well, without you it would be even worse for me."

"It couldn't, Frank." He bent down and kissed her on her quivering lips.

"That's settled. It won't be the life I hoped for you, but I'll make a home. I have no fear of that. I can work. I have an education of sorts, and I have some of the old man's grit. You won't mind roughing it at first?"

"With you?" she asked reproachfully, and he kissed her again.

"It will be rather great, little girl, working together, sharing the rough, making our home in partnership, eh?"

"I have no fear, no misgiving. You—you are so clever."

He laughed. You may not believe the flattery, but it is sweet on the lips of the one woman in your life.

"The only evidence, so far, is that I have won the dearest girl in all the world. But I'll make good." His eyes looked out resolutely, challenging the world. "I can't fail fighting for you."

That day Frank moved out of the big house and took rooms in the lower end of Marston. Sir Thomas frowned when he heard. "Obstinate young devil!" he muttered. "But he'll soon come whining home."



"'My father does not approve. I have left his house. We have quarrelled.'"

Curiously enough, he believed it. Obstinate fathers rarely think they may have bequeathed their firmness to their sons.

Besides, Frank had been reared in luxury. That is unfitting for a struggle.

Three weeks later Frank obtained a situation as secretary to a motor-car manufacturer, the father of a college friend. The works were at Borston, a town twenty miles away. That evening he urged Violet to marry him at once.

"It's only a hundred and fifty," he told her, "but I shall get an insight into the trade. I'll get on. I am sure of that." He was full of confidence. "But in the meantime we can manage on that salary, surely?"

"It's not the money, Frank," she objected. "It's dad. He is really helpless—like a child—in these moods. Without the little I earn, even this house could not go on."

"You must speak to him, Vi dearest," he said. "He can earn enough at his trade to keep himself. You must make him see reason. He is only frittering away money and time with his experiments."

"Not yet, Frank." She made a brave attempt at a smile. "He cannot understand anything when he is in his present state. All his brain and, I sometimes think, his soul also are in his workroom. He knows nothing, sees nothing, understands nothing outside. Don't think I do not want to come, Frank." Her voice broke a little. "It is terrible being torn between the two men I love, but dad is a legacy from mother."

"It will be so lonely. Don't let it run on too long, Vi." His voice was almost irresistibly appealing.

"Won't it be lonely for me?" she asked. "It is always worse for the woman, Frank."

Heavy footsteps came hurrying down the passage, and the door was burst open. Mad Medhurst shouldered into the room, his eyes blazing, his hair ruffled, his head thrown back. One hand clutched at his open shirt.



"'Then you are a pauper!' He flung out the taunt despite Violet's hurt cry."

"I've done it!" he cried. "Oh, my dear, I've done it! It's come at last, Vi! It's fortune, fortune, fortune! Oh, my girl! Mine—the work of my life, of my heart and soul and brain and hands! It will revolutionise—it is wonderful!"

Violet ran to him, a little frightened, with a cry of "Dad!" and he gathered her to his heart.

"No more poverty, no more grinding, soul-destroying poverty! Silks and satins for you, Vi, and motor-cars and—— Oh, Heavens, to have come at last, to taste success before—before the worms have me! . . . All for you, Vi, all for you!" He fondled her hair, stooped and kissed her head, stroked her cheek, and laughed while the tears rolled down the furrows of his cheeks. Then, staring out over the little head upon his breast in the new pride of success, for the first time he was aware of the presence of Frank.

"Who are you, sir?" he demanded. He was a man awakened out of a long trance.

"He is Frank, dad, the man I am going to marry," Violet said.

"The man—— Your name, sir?"

"Frank Belton."

Mad Medhurst stiffened perceptibly. Hard lines showed about his mouth.

"Sir Thomas will call upon me?" he asked.

"My father does not approve," Frank replied. "I have left his house. We have quarrelled."

"Then you are a pauper!" He flung out the taunt despite Violet's hurt cry.

"More or less. But I can work."

"Ay, you can work. And be flung out of work at the whim of your employer. As I was. And your wife can starve her soul and die. Mine died. You are a pauper, as, thank God, your father will be! . . . My invention spells his ruin. Go! Violet is not for you!"

"Dad, I love him!" She tried to struggle from her father's grasp and go to Frank, but the strong arm held her as in a vice.

"The money I shall make is not for *you*. Did you know, I wonder?" Suspicion crept into his eyes. "Did you guess at my success, and come here like a thief to try and steal my child?"

"I knew nothing. I love Violet. I would have spoken before——"

"I told him—you would not listen, dad. You were so busy. Now——"

"The son of Sir Thomas! Never! I will not have a word. Get out of my house! My girl is for your betters, pauper!" He stormed, shouting them down, wild in his hatred of Sir Thomas, exultant in his power to ruin his enemy,

"You are blind with anger," Frank said at last. He had controlled himself sternly for the sake of Violet. She was still held by her father, her face white, her eyes piteous. Fearing her collapse, Frank sought to end the painful scene. "I am going," he said. "It is useless to argue with you. But—no man, no father can destroy love. I shall never surrender Violet."

Three months later Sir Thomas faced Mad Medhurst in the latter's office, newly taken, in the High Street of Marston. Medhurst's invention had revolutionised the bootmaking machinery. Already a big firm of engineers was turning out completed machines. These were lent to factors on a royalty basis. Sir Thomas, alive to the importance of the invention, had been one of the earliest applicants. His request had been refused. Repeated solicitation, growing more and more emphatic, had had no greater success. In desperation, swallowing his pride, Sir Thomas had made a personal appeal to his enemy.

"My final word is 'No'!" He gloated over his former employer. "No machine of mine for you. I know, and you know, what that means. Without my machines you cannot compete. Belton's is done, is out, is finished. You flung me out years ago. You had no mercy——"

"You would not obey me."

"My wife died."

"You cannot lay that at my door. I knew nothing of her."

"You did not care!" Medhurst shouted. "She was ill. Worry at my dismissal aggravated her illness. A long time ago, but I have a long memory, Sir Thomas. As you dealt with me I deal with you. You sought to break me—I break you like this." He snapped a draughtsman's pencil between his nervous fingers and dropped the pieces.

Sir Thomas straightened himself. His lips and cheeks were grey, but he pulled himself together in the face of defeat. They stood thus a moment confronting each other, Medhurst openly exulting, Sir Thomas unbowed, when the door opened. Frank Belton entered radiant.

"Father!" he exclaimed in astonishment. Then: "So much the better. Behold me the happiest of men. I was married to Violet this morning!" He turned

to Medhurst. "She is waiting outside. She wants your forgiveness, sir. Shall I call her in?"

Medhurst glared. He clenched his fist as though he were going to strike Frank. The veins stood out on his lined forehead.

"Never! Married to you! I would sooner have seen her dead! She is no longer a daughter of mine!"

Sir Thomas, newly stung while his defeat and humiliation were yet fresh, turned upon his son.

"You have dared! I disown you! You have chosen your own way in defiance of me and my authority; keep to it, but see that it never crosses mine!"

Frank looked at both angry men. His good-humoured face saddened.

"We have both appealed to you," he said, "over and over again. We appeal now for the last time. Violet and I are not children. We have chosen each other because love would not be denied. We have shown you this. And because of your ancient quarrel you would listen to no reason, but tried to wreck our lives. That is beyond you. Hear me out—it is the last time. Don't you see that you are the losers? I commence no lower than you did, father, and Violet will know no greater hardships than she has always borne for you, Mr. Medhurst. We are man and wife; nothing can alter that now, thank God for it. We have chosen a greater thing than wealth—happiness. Our lives will be full; yours will be empty ones. We may have some regret—that is natural—but you will each have loneliness for your companion. Love is too strong to be checked by you. Love is too strong for real regret. We look forward—a life of happiness and, if God wills, as pray He may, the love of children. A share we offer you. If you will not forgive, what is your future, what is your outlook? Do you see? I am strong. I can work. I can build up a home. You only destroy yours. Can't you realise that you are not necessary to us? We have all in each other." He took a pace forward and held out his hands. "Come! I do not want a single cloud on such a happy day. You may each gain a child—do not each lose the only one you have!"

Medhurst, glowering, folded his arms and said "Go!" Sir Thomas turned his back.

"Very well!" Frank cried, shrugging his shoulders, and was gone.

They listened in silence to his footsteps. Peering through the wire blind, they saw him join his newly-made bride and tuck her arm in his and lean over her.

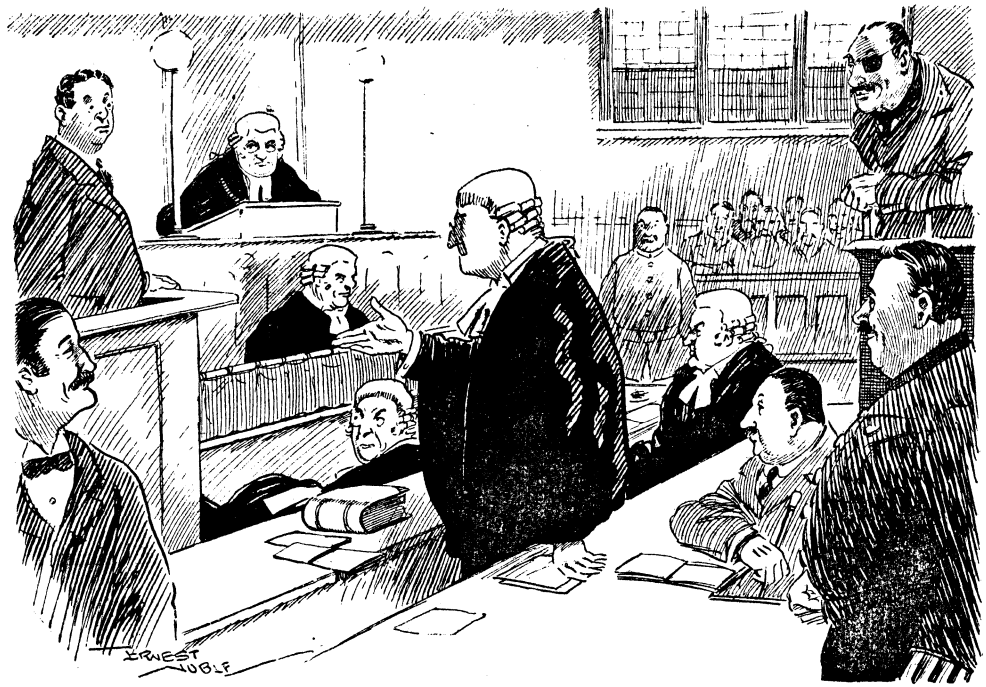
"I made my machine for her," Medhurst said in a low voice. "It was all for her."

"I built my business for him." Sir Thomas's voice was also low. "All my hopes were anchored in him."

"'You are not necessary to us,' he said," Medhurst muttered. "That's true. But she—little Violet——"

"They are necessary to *us*," Sir Thomas completed. He looked at Medhurst, and then both helped to throw up the window.

"Frank! Violet!" they called.



THE OBVIOUS REASON.

"WHY did you not help the defendant in the fight, if that's the case?"
"Because at the time I didn't know which of 'em was going to be the defendant!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

THE REALISTIC TOUCH.

By T. Hodgkinson.

FROM the very first Phyllis and I were agreed upon one thing. The decoration of our little nest should be in the best modern manner. Not for us a higgledy-piggledy collection of presents from Margate and relics of our relations' prowess at hoop-la. We were going to be the *dernier cri*, or, as you would say in your terse Saxon way, the ultimate ejaculation.

It was not an easy ideal to live up to, for modern decoration seems to have taken the cinema as its model—it changes its programme twice weekly—and it was not easy to keep pace with it, even though we *did* take four papers that specialise in such articles as "How to Make a Cosy Corner from an Empty Purse."

It was from one of these that we lately gleaned the interesting fact that in furniture fabrics the floral design has had its day. To be really smart, one must go in for fruit. No longer must the upholstering of your armchairs suggest a bank of roses on which, fairest flower of them all, you gracefully recline. Now it must be redolent of bananas, or Blenheim oranges, or the soothing comfort of the cocoa-nut palm, inviting you to rest and be mistaken for one of the nuts.

Phyllis was on the new idea at once, for we had had no decorative change since we sold the grandfather's clock and bought an aeroplane propeller. "A few yards of cretonne," she declared, "and you won't know the old home. What's your favourite fruit?"

Of course I said asparagus at once. It is always as well to say something expensive in such circumstances. It sounds plutocratic, even if you have never tasted it. Thus I have a friend whose favourite stone is the diamond, though, as a matter of fact, the only time he ever acquired any, they sent him to Portland to select a different stone. I was thinking of him enviously—I just *love* the sea air—when Phyllis went on—

"I can get it finished in time for my birthday, if I hurry." And with that she sallied forth, acquired the necessary material, had a fruit salad for lunch to get the atmosphere, and set to work.

I must admit that, when finished, the room quite attained our ideal of up-to-dateness. The amount of fruit displayed in it would have driven a bigoted vegetarian to relief in butcher's meat. From the curtains to the new chintz camisoles—I am well versed in the technical terms employed in the decorative arts—for the



A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

"GEORGE, dear, I've got something I want to talk to you about."
"I'm glad of that, darling. As a rule, you want to talk to me about something you haven't got."



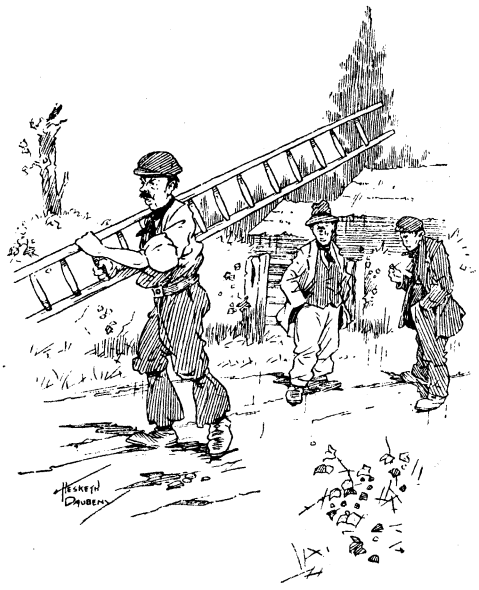
A FEATURE OF THE PLACE.

LADY TOURIST'S HUNDRED AND SECOND QUESTION (as she points to a chimney-stack): Tell me, guide, what is that tall object over there?

GUIDE (wearily): That, madam, is the remains of an old English well—the land having sunk all round has left the brickwork standing.

chairs, the room was an orgy of orchard produce. But it is not with its finished state that I am concerned here, but with the transition period.

Despite Phyllis's energy, the change was only in course of being made when I got home on her birthday. There had been much sewing beforehand, and now the chairs were having what is, I believe, called a try-on. Norah, of course, was helping. I say of course because if you knew Norah you would not expect her to be doing anything else. I don't know whom she gets it from. I'm sure I wasn't like it as a child. Perhaps Phyllis was helpful as an infant. By celebrating her mother's birthday and also mine almost as enthusiastically as her own, Norah does her best to make up for the fact that she has only had four all told.



SOME QUESTIONS CARRY THEIR OWN ANSWERS.

NEIGHBOUR: Wot's the game, Alf?
ALF: Picking up mushrooms, of course. Cawn't yer see for yerself?

The room, as I have said, was not finished, but enough of the new scheme was in evidence for me to catch the fruity effect. The curtains were decidedly Georgian — everything was peaches there—and one armchair was already covered with a design in which apples predominated. One particularly fine specimen in the middle of it struck me as nice enough to eat, so realistic was it.

It was into this chair that I cast myself in mock alarm at the splendour. I thought it would amuse Norah, who sometimes thinks I am rather a wag. But it didn't. Not a little bit. Instead, she uttered a scream almost as loud as the one with which I had hurriedly risen.

"Oh, Daddie," she wailed, "you've squashed it!"—and she retrieved from the chair that very realistic apple. No, it wasn't a real fruit. Just a pin-cushion made in that form. Being a pin-cushion, needless to say, it contained needles.

"My present to Mummie," Norah explained. "I putted the needles in myself."

"And I've putted them in myself," I said, sitting down very gingerly on another chair. "So we're quits."

"What's quits?" asked Norah, but that, as Kipling would say, is another story.

A NEW LAY.

I do not like young Vavasour: each morning in the train
He tells the same old golfing yarns with fatuous might and main.
I've tried for years to cut him dead, but that's all changed to-day:
The hens of Mrs. Vavasour have just commenced to lay.

His eldest boy, whom I detest—a loathsome red-haired brat—
Last week a pebble at me threw, and spoiled my nice new hat.
I swore to break his neck, but now "Boys will be boys," I say:
The hens of Mrs. Vavasour have just commenced to lay.

My wife, poor soul, was much perplexed, and viewed with dire concern
This change of front, and questioned me the reason strange to learn.
But now her fears are quite allayed. She knows, my loving May,
The hens of Mrs. Vavasour have just commenced to lay.

Joe Walker.

A SCOTCH farmer was selling wool one day to a carrier. After weighing it he went into the house to make out an invoice. When he came back, he missed a cheese that had been standing on a shelf behind the outer door, and, glancing at the bag of wool, he observed that it had suddenly increased in size.

"Man," said he to the carrier, "I hae clean forgot the weight o' that bag. Let's put it on the scales once mair."

The carrier could not well refuse. The bag was, of course, found to be heavier by the weight of the cheese inside. A new invoice was made out, and the crestfallen carrier went his way.

At once the farmer's wife missed the cheese, and, rushing to the yard, told her husband that some thief had taken it.

"Na, na, Sarah," replied the farmer quietly. "I hae just sold the cheese for two shillin's the pound."

What are Pearls?



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which have only to be seen and worn for their exquisite beauty to be appreciated.

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This offer also applies to our necklets of No. 2 quality, Two Guineas, and No. 3 quality, Three Guineas. The difference in quality corresponds to the difference in quality of the genuine pearl reproduced. Each is an actual reproduction of the real gem, but the more expensive Ciro represents the more expensive genuine necklet.

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HOW TO SHOP.

THE other day I went with my wife to buy a hat. To my surprise, the occasion developed an interesting ceremonial all its own. When I went for my own next new hat, I decided to adopt similar methods. This is the result:—

"Good morning, sir. What may I show you this morning?"

"I want a hat."

"Certainly, sir. What sort of hat do you require?"

"I want a good hat, one which will wear well and is not too expensive—above all, one which will suit me."

"A bowler, sir?"

"No!" (I fear I shouted.)

"A silk hat, sir?"

"No!" (Shout I did.) The assistant stepped back in alarm, but recovered in time.

"A straw hat, sir?"

"I want," I said firmly, "a hat which will match the overcoat I'm wearing."

"Er—quite so, sir." He spoke in the manner one affects in addressing the very old and the very young, the manner employed by the best heroes in humouring escaped madmen. "Quite so, sir. But can you not help me a little? You see, sir, we have so many different kinds, and I cannot tell which you would prefer."

By this time, at my wife's shop, there would have been mountains of discarded hats on all sides—hats of every conceivable shape, size, colour, and price. I perceived the futility of my tactics. There is only one way for a man to buy a hat. I had recourse to it.

"I want," I said, "a grey velour hat, size seven, with a black band."

S. R. Richardson.



A GOLFER'S DOZEN.

GOLFER: I want a boy who can count. Now, what are five, six, and three?
CADDIE: Five, six, and three. sir? Eleven, sir.
GOLFER: Come on. You'll do.

DENNY was suffering from a severe cold, and a friend sympathetically inquired how he had managed to catch it.

"It's all through the bad faith of a friend that I was tryin' to do a neighbourly turn for," Denny replied. "It was like this, do you mind. I meets Oswald, who was enjoyin' a peach of a case of the blues. 'Will you do me a favour?' he asks. 'I will,' I says. 'I'm going to commit self-suicide,' says he, 'and it's ag'in my conscience and religion, but I've thought of a way. I'll go stand at the lakeside with me back toward you, and you come runnin' like mad, knock against me, and bump me in the water. Do you see? In that way I can get drowned and I won't be committin' suicide, and you will be doin' me a favour.'

"I was for arguin', but I thinks to myself, if I can do the felly a favour and save his soul, besides, for him, I ought to do it—and I did.

"He stands by the lake just as we agreed. I goes back about ten yards to get a good runnin' start, puts on full steam, and go crashin' into where he's standin'."

"Yes, and then?" asked the friend, as he stopped.

"Why, the bloomin' Dutchman had changed his mind, and he stepped aside as I reached him, and I couldn't stop!"



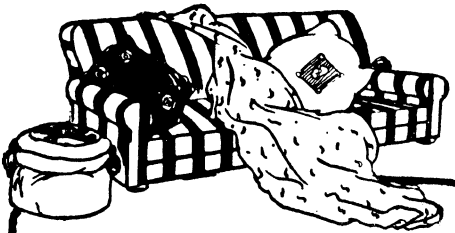
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THE GARDEN LAKE.

It is remarkable what atrocities people will commit in the name of "landscape gardening." A neighbour of mine has made a rectangular excavation in the midst of his garden, cemented the sides, and partly filled it with water. He calls it a lake, but it looks more like a swimming bath for dwarfs.

He tells me it is his intention to throw a bridge across, upon which, on fine summer evenings, he and family will take tea. As he alone weighs well over eighteen stone, I am looking forward to some possibly exciting incidents.

One thrilling episode has already occurred. The jobbing gardener was planting a tree, and the lake-maker was walking backwards to study the effect, when he suddenly vanished from view. The gardener went on planting the tree, and then turned round to look for his employer; he seemed astonished at his mysterious disappearance, and went to search for him behind the gooseberry bushes.

Presently he saw him climbing out of the lake, tastefully ornamented with aquatic plants and picking goldfish out of his streaming whiskers. Then the hireling made the tactical blunder of inquiring in sympathetic tones: "Did you fall in, guv'nor?"

R. H. Roberts.

In an Underground train two men, with that easy grace that betokens long habit, swayed from the straps. They were engaged in a pleasant chat, when a man sitting near rose and offered his seat to a lady, whereupon one of the strap-hangers remarked to the other:

"Although I have been riding in these trains for nearly ten years, I have never yet given my seat to a lady."

"Then I must say you have no manners at all," retorted the friend severely.

"Don't blame my manners," the other retorted, "but the Company's. The fact is, I have never yet had a seat."



THE ALTERNATIVE.

Visitor (sympathisingly): How do you manage to occupy your time now that you cannot get about? Aged Rustic: Sometimes I sits an' thinks, an' then agin I jest sits!

"Have you heard of the new ink that has been invented for writing purposes?" said Jones to Robinson the other day. "No," said Robinson. "What about it?" "Why," was the reply, "it's an absolute safeguard against a breach of promise action, for the ink is guaranteed to fade completely away within three weeks, leaving the page as blank as though no writing had ever been upon it."



Little Girl (who has just been to see "Aladdin"): Mummie, do you think Daddie could get me a lamp like Aladdin's, 'cos I'm always wishing for things?



SOME OLD-FASHIONED BEAUTY RECIPES.

SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE.

By MIMOSA.

The Magnetism of Beautiful Hair.

BEAUTIFUL hair adds immensely to the personal magnetism of both men and women. Actresses and smart women are ever on the look-out for any harmless thing that will increase the natural beauty of their hair. The latest method is to use pure stallax as a shampoo on account of the peculiarly glossy, fluffy, and wavy effect which it leaves. As stallax has never been used much for this purpose, it comes to the chemist only in ¼ lb. sealed original packages, enough for twenty-five or thirty shampoos. A teaspoonful of the fragrant stallax granules, dissolved in a cup of hot water, is more than sufficient for each shampoo. It is very beneficial and stimulating to the hair, apart from its beautifying effect.

Permanently Removing Superfluous Hair.

HOW to permanently, not merely temporarily, remove a downy growth of disfiguring superfluous hair is what many women wish to know. It is a pity that it is not more generally known that pure powdered pheminol, obtainable from the chemist's, may be used for this purpose. It is applied directly to the objectionable hair. The recommended treatment not only instantly removes the hair, leaving no trace, but is designed also to kill the roots completely.

The Curling Iron.

DON'T use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night. When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair, and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant and neither sticky nor greasy.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

MY acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is a very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ¼ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

To Have Smooth, White Skin, Free From Blemish.

DOES your skin chap or roughen easily, or become unduly red or blotchy? Let me tell you a quick and easy way to overcome the trouble and keep your complexion beautifully white, smooth, and soft. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at the chemist's, and use a little before retiring as you would use cold cream. The wax, through some peculiar action, flecks off the rough, discoloured, or blemished skin. The worn-out cuticle comes off just like dandruff on a diseased scalp, only in almost invisible particles. Mercolized wax simply hastens Nature's work, which is the rational and proper way to obtain a perfect complexion, so much sought after, but very seldom seen. The process is perfectly simple and quite harmless.

Blackheads Fly Away.

A PRACTICALLY instantaneous remedy for blackheads, greasy skins, and enlarged pores, recently discovered, is now coming into general use in the boudoir. It is very simple, harmless, and pleasant. Drop a stymol tablet, obtained at the chemist's, in a tumbler full of hot water. After the effervescence has subsided, bathe the face in the liquid, using a small sponge or soft cloth. In a few minutes dry the face, and the offensive blackheads will come right off on the towel. Also the large oily pores immediately close up and efface themselves naturally. The greasiness disappears and the skin is left smooth, soft, and cool. This simple treatment is then repeated a few times at intervals of four or five days to ensure a permanence of the result.

GOING UP.

"HULLO!" said Dædalus. "Crashed, have you? How did it happen?"

"Nose-dived and fell into the sea," answered Icarus sulkily, shaking the water from his wings.

Dædalus looked at him closely; very little escaped his sharp eyes—indeed, they had often been compared to his own gimlets.

"Sun a bit too hot?" he inquired casually.

"No!" snapped Icarus. "If you're going to make fool remarks, Dad, you'd better keep quiet!"

"Don't get waxy; it's a great mistake in this hot weather," said Dædalus serenely. "I merely asked. Thought it was probably wing trouble."

"Not at all," said Icarus; "they were running splendidly. I was tilting at the sun, had just been looping the loop round it, when one of those beastly airmen came along."

"I hear they've changed their uniform again," remarked Daedalus. "How considerate they are to their tailors! Well, this chap put you out of your stride, did he?"

"Clean off," said Icarus. "These mortals are ruining the air—making it like Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday. How often we've looked down and jeered! Now we shall have the trippers coming up here."

"Pity we can't stick up a notice 'Trespassers will be prosecuted.'"

"Not an atom of good; these chaps are so cheeky, nothing stops them."

"Pegasus might," suggested Dædalus; "he's not bad for an old horse. He unseated Bellerophon, if you remember, and prevented Helicon from going up when it tried."

"Right-o!" cried Icarus. "We'll rope him in. With three of us, we ought to be able to make it jolly uncomfortable for those airmen the next time they come up!"

* * * * *

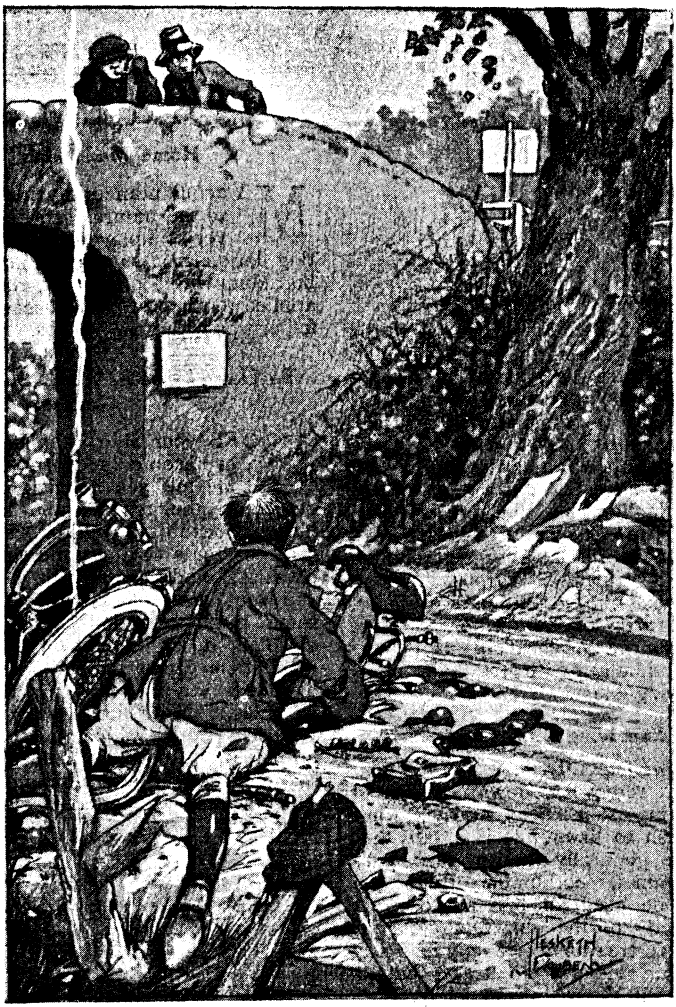
The pilot made a graceful descent.

"What sort of a stunt were you doing up there, old bean?" demanded his friend, who had been watching. "Engine trouble?"

"No, they were running splendidly, only got into an air pocket."

"So that's *that*," said Icarus bitterly.

L. M. Oyler.



FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS——

MOTOR-CYCLIST: Will you please, gentlemen, be more careful where you throw your cigarette-ends? One dropped in my petrol tank.

HARRISON, who had dropped in to see his friend Collins, observed that, during the course of her conversation, the daughter of the house referred several times to a chafing-dish party she had attended the evening before.

Now, Harrison agreed with Collins that the latter's daughter was assuming entirely too many airs. So, to the end that she might be properly disconcerted, and not because he was in any way either desiring or needing information upon its nature and uses, he suddenly blurted out:

"An' what the dickens is a chafing-dish, I want to know?"

"A chafing-dish, Harrison," answered Collins, with an air of the utmost gravity, "is a fryin'-pan that's got into society!"

Facing Third Cover.)

1921 THE MAY

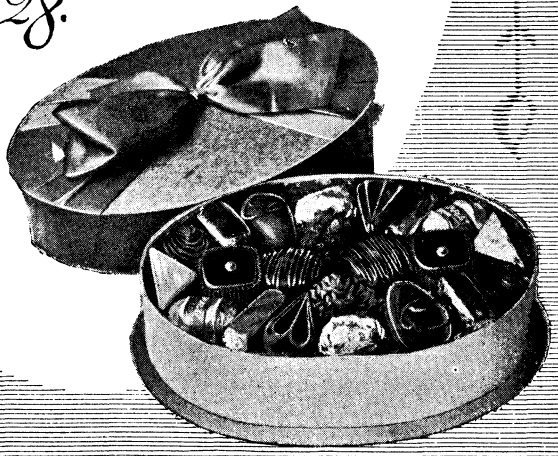
WINDSOR



ONE SHILLING NET

Fry's Chocolat Caprice

A choice assortment introducing many Original recipes by the House of Fry Estd 1728.





A BLUEBELL VISTA IN KEW GARDENS. BY J. MACPHERSON.

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"For a long moment Lyveden stared straight ahead."

A MONTH'S WAGES

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "The Brother of Daphne," "The Courts of Idleness," "Berry and Co."

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

HERE is a note, gentlemen, on its way to a lady. I have set it out now, that you may be wiser than she—by some twenty-four hours. Such as it is, I like my lookers-on to see the best of the game.

Rome,
14th November.

MY DEAR VALERIE,

I observe from your letter that you have lost faith in the man you love. Now, although I know him not, I trust him implicitly. I do not care what has happened. Shall I tell you why? Because I know that you would never have put your trust in him had he been unworthy.

Love plays such queer tricks with its victims, making the fearless timorous, the proud lowly, the trusting doubtful. Who was it coined that mischievous phrase "Too good to be true"? He has much to answer for. Nothing is too good to be true. Not even the love of a man for a maid, Valerie. You found it so good that you were thoroughly prepared to find it false. And the moment you saw the clouds, you believed the sun to be dead. That is heathenish and the way of the people who imagine a vain thing.

His explanation will shame you, of course: but take the lesson to heart.

Your affectionate uncle,
JOHN FOREST.

* * * * *

The Assize Court was crowded. Even

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upon the Bench there was little room to spare; and when the High Sheriff disappeared to return a moment later with two ladies, the Judge's clerk eyed the newcomers with something of that impotent indignation with which a first-class passenger regards the violation of his state by belated individuals whose possession of first-class tickets is highly dubious.

The calendar contained no case of unusual interest, but the Red Judge comes to Brooch but three times a year, and the old market-town makes the most of its gaol deliveries.

At the moment of the ladies' entering, Mr. Albert Morgan was in charge of the jury, and the twelve gentlemen were in course of hearkening to evidence which suggested with painful clarity that the prisoner's sins of commission included that of felony. That Mr. Morgan had been caught red-handed had not prevented the rogue from pleading "Not guilty." He had stood in docks before now. Besides, enough money had been found to instruct a member of the Bar—if not a solicitor—to argue his impudent case . . .

"Anthony Lyveden," said counsel for the Crown.

"Anthony Lyveden!" cried the constable-usher.

"Anthony Lyveden!" bawled his colleague, opening the door of the Court.

Anthony, who was pacing the hall, came quickly. A moment later he had entered the box.

His footman's overcoat accentuated at once his height and his breeding. It suited the figure admirably, but not the man. The handsome, clean-cut face, the excellence of his speech—above all, the personality of the witness—gave the lie to his garb. Moreover, he displayed a quiet dignity of manner which was as different from that of the most exquisite lackey as is sable from civet. From resting upon him the eyes of the Court began to stare . . .

Lest their owners be thought unmannerly, it is fair to record that the last witness, whilst swearing that he was a chauffeur, had resembled one of the landed gentry of the Edwardian Age, and that the last but one—to wit, the chauffeur's employer—had sworn that he was a retired draper, and looked exactly like one.

Anthony took the oath and glanced about him.

From the dock Mr. Morgan was regarding him with a malevolent glare. Farther back sat George Alison, the chauffeur, upon his face an expression of profound resignation, which was plainly intended to indicate to his colleague the unpleasant nature of his late ordeal. And there, between the High Sheriff and Lady Touchstone, sat Miss Valerie French . . .

With narrowed eyes and a face impassive as a mask she met the footman's look. By her side her aunt was smiling recognition, but Anthony never saw that. Gazing upon the beauty of that face which he had once transfigured, he found it frozen. That proud red bow of a mouth, that had been his for the taking, might have been graven of precious stone. Here was no vestige of Love. Tenderness was clean gone. Even as he looked, the blue eyes shifted casually to wander around the Court . . . The cold wind of Indifference made Anthony's heart shiver within him.

Small wonder that he replied to counsel's questions mechanically, like a man in a dream.

He had, of course, known that he was out of favour.

One perfect Wednesday she had worshipped him to his face: upon the following Sabbath he had been turned away from her doors. For this mysterious fall from grace no reason had been vouchsafed. Moreover, so high was the favour, so eminent the grace, that Anthony had been desperately bruised. For a little he had been stunned. More than once, as he had walked dazedly home, he had tripped and stumbled. And, on reaching the house, he had done what he had never thought to do—surreptitiously poured and swallowed a glass of his master's brandy. As the days marched by, he had in some sort recovered—slowly, if for no other reason because Grief should have air and not be clapped under hatches. And now—here was the lady, pointing in person the unpleasant truth that she had no further use for him . . .

Had they but told their love before his downfall, his course would have been simple. In that case, to ask an explanation of his dismissal would have been lawful enough. But things had not gone so far. It was while they were yet upon the threshold of harmony that the end had come. Of his honesty Anthony felt that he had no right to question her. The lady had not engaged herself: she was still free to do as she pleased. His cursed footmanhood was an additional embarrassment. To speak vulgarly, it put the lid on. And now—why was she here?

Thus throughout his examination-in-chief the imps of Recollection and Speculation spun and whirled in his brain-pan.

Why on earth was she there?

It is doubtful whether Miss French herself could have answered that question.

You will please believe, gentlemen, that her heart had brought her. It is the plain truth. Though Anthony did not know it, he had taken her faith in his hands and torn it across and across. For all that, she loved him still. She had a strange, pathetic longing to see him once more, and the case of "The King against Morgan" had offered her the chance. She had heard of the matter, and knew he must come to Court to give his evidence: in such a place she would be able to study him undisturbed, and, most important of all, any speech between them would be safely impossible. A note to the High Sheriff had arranged her admission . . . Incidentally, a burst tire on the way from Bell Hammer had almost spoiled everything. As we have seen, however, the ladies were just in time . . .

"Yes," purred counsel for the Crown. "And then?"

"Then the prisoner gave a cry and rushed into the drawing-room."

"What did you do?"

"I followed him and seized him. When assistance arrived, he was secured, and in the morning he was handed over to the police."

With a nod, counsel resumed his seat.

Mr. Morgan's representative got upon his feet with a truculent air. As he did so, somebody touched him upon the shoulder, and he turned to see his client leaning out of the dock. With an apologetic smirk at his lordship, the lawyer left his seat . . .

"What is it? What is it?" he whispered testily.

Mr. Morgan breathed into his ear.

"This is the swine," he said evilly. "Put it acrost 'im. Arsk 'im——"

"You shut yer face," said his adviser. "An' don' try an' teach me my job, or I'll 'ave you in the box."

Before this threat Mr. Morgan subsided muttering.

Impatiently counsel for the defence returned to his place. Once there, he adjusted his gown, consulted a blank sheet of paper with some acerbity, and then addressed himself to the witness.

"Why did you leave your last place?"

Anthony hesitated. Then—

"I was unable to get on with one member of the household," he said.

"Were you dismissed?"

"I was."

"Why?"

"As the result of a difference I had."

"Come, come, sir. That's no answer."

"The son of the house insulted me, and I knocked him down."

Such a sensational reply fairly took the wind out of counsel's sails. Amid a stifled murmur of excitement he strove to collect himself.

"You—er—assaulted him?"

"I did."

"Rather hasty, aren't you?"

"I don't think so."

"We shall see. Now, upon the night in question—the night of the burglary with which my client is charged—where had you been?"

"To a private house."

"From which you, a footman, returned at four in the morning?"

"Yes," said Anthony.

"Did you have any drinks at the—er—private house?"

"I drank some wine."

"How many hours were you there?"

"About five."

"You can drink a good deal in five hours?"

"You can," said Anthony.

"How many drinks did you have?"

"I drank two or three glasses of wine."

"What sort of wine?"

"Champagne."

"In fact, you had a good evening?"

"I enjoyed myself very much."

"Exactly. And you returned—shall we say 'happy'?"

"If you are suggesting that I was under the influence of drink——"

"Answer my question, sir."

The Judge interfered.

"Either, Mr. Blink, you are suggesting that the witness was under the influence of drink, or I fail to see the point of your questions."

Hurried counsel agreed, announced magnanimously that he would not pursue the matter, and plunged into a series of causeless and empty inquiries in the hope of stumbling upon an answer with which he might first of all hammer the witness and then erect a defence. His efforts went unrewarded, and behind him in the dock Mr. Morgan ground his teeth with vexation. That he was not getting his friends' money's worth was obvious. He did not expect to get off, but if he could have seen Lyveden

discredited he would have taken his gruel with a grin. Venomously he gnawed his fingers . . .

For the twentieth time counsel drew a bow at a venture.

"You're not under notice to leave your present place?"

"Yes," said Anthony, "I am."

Despite herself, Valerie French started, and the chauffeur at the back of the Court stared at the witness wide-eyed. The Court, which had almost lost interest, pricked up its ears. Hardly disguising his relief, counsel proceeded to develop the impression in his own time-honoured way. Turning his back upon the witness, he elevated his eyebrows and then smiled very pleasantly upon a ventilator immediately above the jury-box.

"Really?" he said. "This is most interesting. Under notice, are you? Dear me . . . Why?"

"I have given notice myself."

"Oh, indeed. Why?"

"For private reasons."

Counsel appeared to find this answer so highly diverting that after a moment's hesitation the jury joined in his merriment. As the titter subsided—

"I'm afraid," said Mr. Blink apologetically, "I'm afraid I can't take that."

Anthony paled.

"I wish," he said, "to leave the neighbourhood."

"Why?"

Anthony hesitated, and the Judge laid down his pen.

"Mr. Blink, I don't wish in any way to embarrass you, but can this affect your case?"

An expert in impudence, Mr. Blink was well aware of the amazing possibilities of consummate audacity.

"My lord," he said solemnly, "my suggestion is that the witness knows considerably more about this burglary than he is willing to admit."

The improvised shaft went home.

For a moment there was dead silence. Then someone gasped audibly, a breeze of emotion rustled over the Court, and the jury leaned forward . . . Only the Judge, before him a list of the prisoner's previous convictions, sat like an image.

With a spiteful gleam in his eyes, Mr. Morgan moistened his lips. This was more like it.

Counsel, now in his element, addressed the witness.

"Whence," he demanded dramatically, "whence this sudden desire to make yourself scarce?"

Breathlessly the reply was awaited . . .

None came, however, and counsel took up the running with a dry laugh.

"Very good," he said. "I take your answer."

Anthony stepped down and joined the chauffeur without a word.

Ten minutes later Mr. Blink was fanning the flame of mistrust into a conflagration. What, he asked, did the jury think? They were men of the world. Candidly, had they ever seen such a chauffeur and footman before? Did they look like servants? Of course they had Mr. Bumble's—their master's—confidence. *But had they the jury's?* He did not wish to usurp the functions of the cinema or the stage, but it was his duty to remind them that sometimes Truth was stranger than Fiction . . . Here were two servants, who were obviously not servants at all, giving such overwhelming satisfaction that they were allowed unheard-of liberty—liberty which afforded unrivalled opportunities . . . "Out till four in the morning, gentlemen. A latch-key to let them in. A motor-car at their disposal. And now—leaving this comfortable—this perfect situation. Why? No answer. *Is it because the game is up, gentlemen?* . . ."

His lordship, who in his time had seen many juries befooled, summed up rather wearily, and at twenty-five minutes to one Mr. Morgan was found "Not guilty."

That the latter should greet the verdict with a gesture of derision verged, all things considered, upon indecency. It is good to think that the warder who hustled him from the dock, and played full-back for the prison, made this as clear as daylight.

* * * * *

Valerie left the Court in some annoyance. She was annoyed that Anthony had been lessened, and she was annoyed to find that she cared whether he had been lessened or not. She would also have liked to know the reason for his proposed departure. Undoubtedly it had to do with Anne Alison. His very reticence proved it. Perhaps she was going, too . . . Anne Alison . . . At the very thought of the girl, Valerie's resentment welled up anew. Jealousy knows no law. The reflection that it was at her instance that Anthony had gone as footman to the house where Anne was housemaid rode her with a harsh and merciless hand.

Often enough, sunk in most bitter contemplation of this fact, she got no further.

That she got no further to-day was due to a timely interruption—nothing less, in fact, than a snort of an intensity too clamorous to be ignored.

Valerie looked up.



"Holding it in place with his knee, his lordship reached for the lamp."

"At last," said Lady Touchstone with some asperity. "That's the fourth."

"The fourth what?" said Valerie.

"The fourth snort," said her aunt. "I don't know what's the matter with you nowadays? To snort at all, I must be profoundly moved. You know that as well as I do."

"What's the matter?" said Valerie.

Lady Touchstone stared at her.

"My dear," she said, "what you want is a change. You have just witnessed what I hope is the most flagrant miscarriage of justice of recent years, you have seen twelve fools bamboozled by a knave, you have heard a friend of yours grossly insulted, and you ask me what's the matter." The car swung round a corner, and Lady Touchstone, who was unready, heeled over with a cry. "I wish Mason wouldn't do that," she added testily, dabbing at her *toque*. "So subversive of dignity. What was I saying? Oh, yes. A change. We'd better go to Nice."

Before Miss French could reply, a deafening report from beneath them announced the dissolution of another tire.

Mason brought the car to the side of the road. Then he applied the hand-brake and alighted heavily to inspect the damage.

With a resigned air, Lady Touchstone sat awaiting his report.

Valerie began to laugh.

"Shall I tell you what he's doing?" she said.

Her aunt regarded her.

"I presume he's staring at the wheel," she said shortly. "Though of what interest a deflated tire can be to anybody, passes my comprehension."

"Not at all," said her niece. "Mason is trying to make up his mind to tell you that we shall have to walk home. He only brought one spare cover, and we've used that."

Lady Touchstone glanced at her watch.

"And the Billows," she said grimly, "are coming to lunch in twenty minutes." She raised her voice. "All right, Mason. Miss Valerie's broken it to me. Stop the first vehicle that approaches and ask them to give us a lift."

"Very good, my lady."

"Supposing," said Valerie, "it's a milk-float."

"So much the better," replied her aunt. "I've always wanted to ride in a milk-float. It's the survival of the Roman chariot." Placidly she settled herself in her corner and closed her eyes. "Dear me. What a relief it is not to be moving! If only the Billows weren't coming . . ."

Neither she nor Valerie heard the approach of the Rolls. Indeed, it was not until George Alison, in response to Mason's signals, was bringing the great blue car actually alongside that the ladies realised that help was at hand.

The sight of Anthony Lyveden alighting to take his master's orders chilled Valerie like the breath of a crypt. Her aunt, on the contrary, was plainly as pleased as Punch at the encounter . . .

So soon as Mr. Bumble appreciated that it was the quality of Bell Hammer who sought his assistance, he took appropriate action. Hat in hand, he descended into the road and, speaking with grave civility, put his car at the ladies' disposal. This being accepted, he handed them out of their own and ushered them into the Rolls. Then he bowed very pleasantly and closed the door.

Valerie started to her feet.

"But, Mr. Bumble," she cried, "of course you're coming. Aunt Harriet, we can't . . ."

"Of course we can't," said Lady Touchstone. "Mr. Bumble, get in at once."

Humbly their host shook his head.

"Bell 'Ammer is no distance, me lady, an' the car can come back. I shouldden dream o' takin' advantage of an acciden', me lady."

Regretting very much that she had never noticed the ex-draper before, Lady Touchstone sought desperately to pull the position round.

"Mr. Bumble," she said, "we cannot use your car without you. That we do not know one another is my fault. Please get in. I want to tell you how very sorry we are about your case."

Again Mr. Bumble bowed.

"Your ladyship is most kind. If Mrs. Bumble was 'ere, it'd be different . . . But we're both of us proud, me lady, fer you to 'ave the car. An'—an' please don' put yerself out, m'm. I'm in no 'urry."

The quiet determination of his tone was unmistakable. The little man was clearly stoutly resolved not to improve an acquaintance which his wife did not share. Wealth had not clouded his memory nor corrupted his simple heart.

Lady Touchstone hauled down her flag.

"You're one of the old school, Mr. Bumble," she said, "so we won't argue. Will you tell Mrs. Bumble that, if Thursday's quite convenient, we shall call at The Shrubbery and ask her to give us some tea?"

And Valerie put out her hand.

"Good-bye for the present," she said. "Thank you so very much."

The next moment they were gone.

Hat still in hand, the ex-draper looked after the car.

"Lady by name an' lady by nature," he said softly. Then he put on his hat and turned to Mason. "'Ave a cigar, boy. I 'ate smokin' alone."

As they swept out of sight, Lady Touchstone picked up the speaking tube.

"George Alison!" she cried. Up went the chauffeur's head. "Stop the car, please. Valerie and Major Lyveden will change places. We want to discuss the trial."

George slowed up with a grin.

Jack opened the door for Jill, who descended with an airy nod of greeting which hurt him more than the stoniest disregard. With her head high, she stepped to the seat he had left. As he was closing the high side-door upon her, her fur coat intervened,

and Jack set it gently aside. Jill felt the touch, turned, glanced down, and twitched the garment away . . .

Anthony's eyes blazed. A short six inches away, Valerie's blazed back . . .

On the opposite side of the car George and Lady Touchstone were hanging out of their seats, raving concurrent invective against the Laws of England.

For a moment eyes searched eyes steadily. Then, with a faint smile, Anthony leaned forward and kissed the proud red lips. Then he shut the door with infinite care . . .

Had Miss French's fur coat been less voluminous, the gulf which Error had set between the lovers might have been bridged within the week. But it was a fine wrap, and ample. In an instant the gulf had become a sea of troubles, with the house that Jack had built upon one side, and the castle which Jill had raised upon the other. And, as for a bridge, their labour now was lost that sought to build one. It had become a case for a causeway.

As the car slid forward—

"And why," said Lady Touchstone, "are you going away?"

Anthony laughed jerkily.

"Have a heart, Lady Touchstone," he cried. "I've already risked imprisonment to save my secret."

Her ladyship looked about her.

"This," she said, "appears to be the interior of an expensive limousine landaulette. Very different from a court-house. The seats are softer, for one thing. Besides, from his adviser the client should conceal nothing."

"Are you my adviser?"

"That," said Lady Touchstone, "is my *rôle*."

"But am I your client?"

"I advise you to be."

For a long moment Lyveden stared straight ahead. Upon the front seat Miss French was chattering to George Alison with an unwonted liveliness, punctuated with little bursts of merriment. All the while she kept her head so turned that Anthony might miss not a jot of her gaiety . . .

"I'm sorry," said Lyveden quietly. "You're very kind, Lady Touchstone, and I'm properly grateful. But I can't tell you."

He was, of course, perfectly right. Intervention was not to be thought of, much less encouraged. For one thing, to mutter that Valerie and he were estranged would be to proclaim a previous intimacy. For another, it was an affair, not of hearts only, but of deeps calling. Each lifting up the other's heart, the twain had distilled a music that is not of this world: it was unthinkable that an outsider should be shown a single note of the score. Finally, Anthony wanted no peace-making. What had he to do with peace?

The silver cord was loosed, but he had not loosed it. The golden bowl was broken, but not at his hand. It was she—Valerie French—that had wrought the havoc. That cord and bowl were the property as much of Anthony as of her had not weighed with the lady. As if this were not enough, he was to be used like a leper . . . What had he to do with peace?

The thought that he had been able to pick up the glove she had thrown down with such a flourish elated him strangely. To kiss My Lady Disdain upon the mouth—that was an answer. That would teach her to draw upon an unarmed man. For she had thought him weaponless. What footman carries a sword? And then, in the nick of time, Fate had thrust a rapier into the flunkey's hand . . .

Lady Touchstone was speaking . . .

"Well, well," she said gently, "perhaps you're right. I'm sorry, you know. I saw two lives smashed once by a clerical error on the part of a florist's assistant. I knew them both, too, but neither would speak. When it was just too late, Eleanor opened her mouth . . . Unknown to her, I went to the florist's shop and looked at their order-book. Sure enough, there was the trouble. I never told her, of course. But it's haunted me ever since. Two lives . . . smashed . . . And they say that silence is golden . . . When you do go, will you let me have your address?"

"I can imagine nothing more worthless," said Anthony. "But I think I've been rude enough. I promise to send it you."

For no apparent reason he laughed bitterly.

His companion shuddered.

"Don't laugh like that, Major Lyveden. It's bad for my heart. Oh, dear. How fast George is driving! We shall be at Bell Hammer before we know where we are." Suddenly she leaned forward and caught at the footman's sleeve. "Anthony Lyveden, I've shown you my hand. As you love my niece, what is the trouble?"

Anthony set his teeth.

"Can't be done," he said, "Lady Touchstone. We've got to work it out for ourselves."

"Curse your pride," said that lady. "There. Now I've sworn at you. But it's your own fault. And how are you two goats going to work it out for yourselves? With one of you bleating at Nice, and the other—Heaven knows where—in England? D'you go to Church, Anthony Lyveden?"

"I used to."

"Then go again. Get to your knees and pray. Pray to be delivered from blindness of heart, Anthony Lyveden. D'you hear? Blindness of heart. From pride, vainglory and hypocrisy. Not that you're hypocritical, but they go together, and it'll do no harm. And I shall make Valerie go, and—and I shall pray for you both."

Anthony slid off his hat and put her hand to his lips . . .

As he did so, the car sped past a red lodge and into a curling drive.

Lady Touchstone sought for a pocket-handkerchief.

"There's a tear on my nose," she explained. "I can feel it. It's a real compliment, Anthony Lyveden. You're the very first man that's ever made Harriet Touchstone cry."

The car swept to the steps.

Anthony was down in a flash. Tenderly he handed her out . .

By the time her aunt had alighted, Valerie was at the top of the steps. Anthony walked up to her steadily. Then he took off his hat.

"I humbly apologise," he said. "It was unpardonable."

"You're right," said Valerie quietly. "That's just what it was."

As she spoke, a servant opened the door.

Valerie turned on her heel and walked into the house.

That same evening, when the others had gone to bed, Anthony called his terrier and set him upon his knee.

"Patch," he said, "I've come back to the fold." As was his habit when mystified, the terrier swallowed apologetically. "Is that too hard for you, my fellow? Let me put it like this. Once there were just you and I, weren't there? A fool and his dog. Caring for nobody, nobody caring for them, but to each other—just everything." The Sealyham licked his face. "Then one day She came . . . She. A wonderful, peerless creature, to dazzle the poor fool's eyes. And the fool just fell down and worshipped her. He didn't forget his little dog, Patch. He never did that. But—well, it wasn't the same. Of course not. You must have felt it sometimes . . . But you're a good little chap. And I couldn't help it, Patch. She—seemed—so—very—sweet . . . I risked your life for her once. I did, really." He paused to stare into the fire. Then he took a deep breath. "By Jove, if you'd gone . . . I should have been left now, shouldn't I? Properly carted. Well, well, old fellow, it's over now. Never again, Patch. The fool's learned his lesson. You'd never let me down, would you? No. But she has. They say it's a way women have. And I'm going to wash her right out of my life, Patch. Right out. Now."

He set the dog down, stretched out his arms wearily, and got upon his feet. The terrier leaped up and down as if he had been promised a walk.

Anthony laughed.

"So? You're pleased, are you? Ah, well . . ."

He turned out the gas, and the two passed upstairs.

Anthony was as good as his word.

You cannot kill Memory, but you can send the jade packing. That he did faithfully. By sheer force of will he thrust all thoughts of Valerie out of his head. They returned ceaselessly, to be as ceaselessly rejected. Their rejection took the form of displacement. They were, so to speak, crowded out. All day long he was for ever forcing his attention upon some matter or other to the exclusion of the lady. A thousand times she came tripping—always he fobbed her off. Considering how much of late he had been content to drift with the stream, the way in which his mind bent to the oars was amazing. His output of mental energy was extraordinary. Will rode Brain with a bloody spur. When night came, the man was worn out . . .

In the circumstances it was hard, though not surprising, that he should have dreamed so consistently of the tall, dark girl. It suggests that Nature is an unscrupulous opponent. Be that as it may, night after night, while the man slept, the tares were sown. Sleep, whom he had counted his ally, proved herself neutral. She was content to knit up the sleeve of care. That her handmaidens as fast unravelled it was none of her business. After a week of this devilry, Anthony groaned. Then he set his teeth, and, pleading insomnia, obtained permission to walk abroad after supper. With Patch at his heels, he covered mile after mile. So, though the mental strain was prolonged, he became physically played out.

His determination had its reward. He came to sleep like the dead.

With a sigh for his simplicity, Nature plucked another iron out of the fire . . .

Anthony began to lose weight.

* * * * *

Thursday afternoon came and went, and with it Lady Touchstone and Valerie. The Bumbles were duly overwhelmed, treating their visitors with an embarrassing deference which nothing could induce them to discard: out of pure courtesy Lady Touchstone ate enough for a schoolboy, thereby doing much to atone for Valerie, who ate nothing at all: the Alisons respectfully observed the saturnalia and solemnly reduced Mason to a state of nervous disorder by entertaining him in the servants' hall: Anthony kept out of the way.

Not so Patch, however, who must, of course, put his small foot into it with a splash.

The visitors were in the act of emerging from the front door, Mrs. Bumble was dropping the second of three tremulous curtsies, and Mr. Bumble was offering the stirrup-cup of humble duty, when the terrier emerged from some laurels and, recognising Valerie, rushed delightedly to her side. Before she was aware of his presence, he was leaping to lick her face . . .

To disregard such unaffected benevolence would have been worse than churlish, and Valerie stooped to the Sealyham and gave him her cheek. Patch lay down on his back and put his legs in the air. His tail was going, and there was a shy invitation in the bright brown eyes which was irresistible. Valerie hesitated. Then, on a sudden impulse, she picked up the little white dog and held him close.

"Good-bye, Patch," she whispered. "Good-bye."

She kissed the rough white head and put him down tenderly. Then she stepped into the car with a quivering lip.

It was as the car was turning out of the drive that she burst into tears . . .

Such consolation as Lady Touchstone sought to administer was gently but firmly declined; and, since her niece would have none of it, neither, gentlemen, shall you.

It was a few hours later—to be exact, at a quarter before ten o'clock—that a gentleman of some distinction laid down *The Times*.

For a moment or two he sat still, looking into the fire. Then he picked up a pile of depositions and drew a pencil-case from his pocket. For a while the occasional flick of a page argued his awful attention to the recital of crime: then the keen grey eyes slid back to the glowing coals, and the long-hand went by the board. It was evident that there was some extraneous matter soliciting his lordship's regard, and in some sort gaining the same because of its importunity.

Mr. Justice Molehill was all alone. He had sent his marshal to the cinema, "lest the boy should grow dull," and, except for the servants, somewhere below stairs, the great gaunt mansion used as the Judge's Lodging lodged for the nonce no other inmate.

The room in which the Judge sat was enormous. Indeed, the shaded lamp, set upon a table close to his shoulder, did little more than insist upon the depths of the chamber, which to illumine effectively you would have needed a score of lamps slung from the ceiling. For all its size, however, the room was sparsely furnished. At the far end a huge carved writing-table loomed out of the shadows; six high-backed chairs reared themselves here and there against the walls; between prodigious windows a gigantic press lifted its massive head. Reckoning the little table bearing the lamp, and a pair of easy-chairs, that is a ready inventory. A heavy carpet and curtains of the same dull red certainly excluded the draughts. For all that, it was not a chamber in which to sit apart from the fire. The marshal hated the place openly, and, on being rallied by the Judge, had confessed that it "got on his nerves." He had even suggested that it was haunted. Mr. Justice Molehill had laughed him to scorn.

His lordship, then, was gazing upon the fire. After, perhaps, about two minutes of time, he crossed his knees suddenly and flung up his hand in a little gesture of impatience.

"Anthony Lyveden," he muttered. "Where on earth have I heard that name?"

The expression upon his face was that of a man absorbed in searching his memory. He was, indeed, so much engrossed in this occupation that the keen grey eyes went straying whither they listed.

Let us follow those eyes.

From the light of the fire in its cage to the toe of his lordship's pump, up to the chiselled mantel and the cigarette-box—the marshal's—perched on the narrow ledge, down to the heavy bell-pull by the side of the hearth, on to a high-backed chair against the wall, down again to the floor—all black here, for

the light is too distant to show the carpet's hue—on into the shadows, where something—the table, of course—shows like a grim bas-relief hewn out of the darkness, on to its ponderous top, where the candles . . .

It was upon the top of the table that the keen grey eyes came to rest—idly. The next moment his lordship's frame stiffened with a shock.

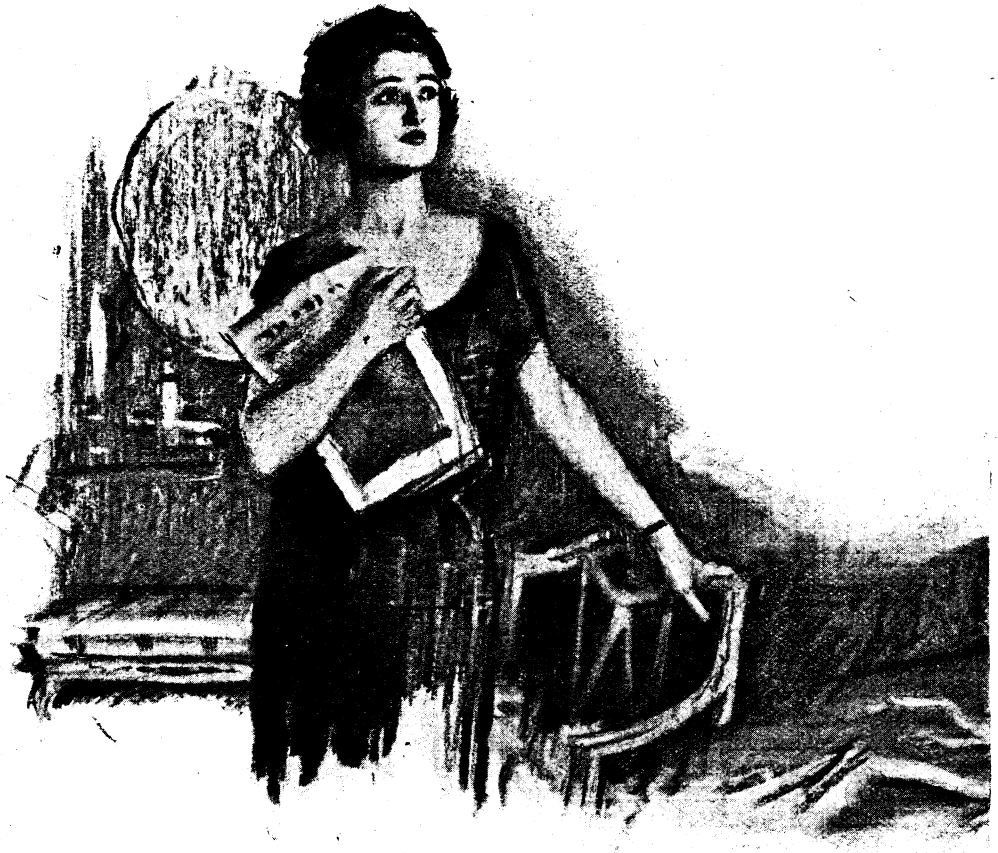
The radiance of two wax candles was illuminating the bitterness of death upon a man's face. It was an old face, long, gaunt, clean-shaven, and the ill-fitting wig that gaped about the shrunken temples gave it the queer pinched look which tells of a starved belly. Eyes red-rimmed and staring, a long thin nose, and an unearthly pallor, made it displeasing: the dropped jaw, showing the toothless gums, made it repulsive.

The hair upon Mr. Justice Molehill's head began to rise.

For a moment the face stayed motionless. Then the grey lids flickered, and a trembling hand stole up out of the darkness to twitch at the lower lip. A paper upon the table appeared to claim the attention of those horrible eyes . . . But not for long. Indeed, they had subjected the document to the very barest perusal, when, with a convulsive movement, the creature clawed at the paper, tore it with ravening hands and, clapping the fragments to its distorted mouth, bit and savaged it like a demoniac . . .

Hardened as he was to the spectacle of Rage dominant, his lordship paled before this paroxysm of unearthly passion. All the agony of disappointed avarice, all the torment of mortification in defeat, all the frenzy of impotent fury, blazed in one hideous blend out of that frightful countenance. Could he have moved, the Judge would have crossed himself.

Then suddenly came a change. The passion ebbed out of the face, the paper fluttered out of the loosened fingers, the



"'I wonder,' she said shakily, 'if you could give me Major Lyveden's address.'

red-rimmed eyes took on another look. Snail-slow the trembling hand was travelling across the table . . .

Immediately between the silver candlesticks lay a horse-pistol. As the fingers approached it, their trembling increased.

With the approach of the weapon, the horror upon the face became unspeakable. The eyes were starting, the mouth working painfully. Resolved to be rid of life, yet terrified to die, the wretch was writhing. There never was seen so loath-



'I would, like a shot,' said Anne heartily, 'but he wouldn't leave one.'"

Twice they hesitated, craven flesh rebelling against a recreant will. They shook so frightfully upon encountering the butt that it seemed as if to grasp it were beyond their power. Once they had seized it, however, the trembling left them and passed into the hand . . .

some a paradox. Cowardice was gone crusading.

The Judge's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth.

With the assistance of the other hand, the pistol had been turned about, but head and hands were all shaking so violently that

the introduction of the muzzle into the gaping mouth was hardly accomplished. Twice cup missed lip, and the steel went jabbing against the ashen cheek. The next moment gums drummed on the metal with a hideous vibration.

With a shock his lordship recognised the sound as one which he and the marshal had heard more than once at this hour, and, after discussion, had attributed to an idiosyncrasy of water under the influence of heat.

That the supreme moment had arrived would have been patent from the eyes alone. Riveted upon the trigger-finger, squinting until the pupils were almost lost to view, they were the orbs of a fiend. Even as the Judge gazed, the light of Insanity took flaming possession. Hell, grown impatient, had sent a sheriff for the usurer's soul . . .

With a dull crash the fire fell in, and the Judge started to his feet with an oath.

The candles were gone.

The first thing which Mr. Justice Molehill did was to wipe the sweat from his face, and the second, to mix himself and consume the strongest whisky and soda he had swallowed for years. Then, being a man of stout heart, he picked up the lamp and walked to the writing-table at the end of the room. Here all was in order, and the closest scrutiny failed to reveal any trace of the vision. The chair was there, certainly, but its seat was dusty, and upon the table itself there was nothing at all. The curtain behind the chair, when disarranged, disclosed a window, heavily shuttered as usual, but nothing more.

Now, his lordship disliked defeat as much as anybody, but if there was one thing which he detested more than another, it was an inability to prove an excellent case. Looking at it from his point of view, he had here a personal experience at once as interesting and incredible as a man could fairly be expected to relate. The reflection was most provoking. So much so, indeed, that, after a moment's hesitation, the Judge picked up the chair and placed it upon the table. Then he bent down and, thrusting his hands beneath the edge of the carpet, lifted this up from the floor. The fabric was heavy, but he hauled with a will, and a moment later he was standing upon the boards he had uncovered. Thereafter, at the cost of a good deal of exertion, he managed to roll it back from the window as far as the table itself. Holding it in place with his knee, his lordship reached for the lamp . . .

It was his intention to discover whether the boards did not afford some real evidence of the crime, and it is a matter for regret that, upon perceiving that the floor had been diligently stained all over with some coffee-coloured preparation, for the second time in the evening his lordship swore. He was, in fact, in some dudgeon about to replace the lamp, when the torn edge of paper, showing between two boards, caught his observant eye . . .

The fine handwriting was faded, but still quite legible.

10*th Jan.*, 1789.

Sir,

Your letter leaves me no hope but that you have been most grossly betrayed. Should you so desire, I will render you indisputable proofs that the Marquess of Bedlington hath no need of funds, much less hath delivered in any's favour a bond for the vast sum declared in your letter. In a word, though the name subscribed to the bond be that of Bedlington, it was not the Marquess' hand that set it there. Who hath done you this injury, I know not, but Time hath shown that his lordship's twin brother, Lord Stephen Rome, lately decd., with whom the Marquess was justly at variance, more than once scrupled not to assume his brother's person and title to compass his own ends . . .

At the mention of the twin brother, Mr. Justice Molehill raised his keen grey eyes to stare at the lamp.

"Rome," he said softly. "Rome. That's right. It was at the Grand Hotel. And Anthony Lyveden was the name of the sole legatee. I knew I'd heard it before."

* * * * *

Mrs. Bumble's parlourmaid was counting upon her pink fingers.

"Sunday twenty-eight, Monday twenty-nine, to-day thirty . . . Yes. To-morrow's the first of December."

George Alison regarded his wife.

"Let us hope," he said gloomily, "that it's a better month. In the course of the last four weeks I've had seventeen punctures, I've endured a miscarriage of justice which has undoubtedly shortened my life, and I've lost as good a pal as ever I struck."

"To hear you speak," said Betty, "anyone would think that Anne and I had enjoyed ourselves. It's been just as bad for us."

The chauffeur shook his head.

"You rave," he said shortly. "In the first place, what have you to do with tires?"

"If we haven't had the punctures," was the reply, "we've heard enough about them."

"Yes," said Anne. "It's been almost as bad as golf. 'What I did at the fourteenth hole.'"

"In the second place," said George, "women adore irregularity. I can conceive nothing more delectable to the feminine appetite than the spectacle of Justice derailed. The apotheosis of our esteemed friend and late colleague, Mr. Albert Morgan, has afforded you two more indirect gratification than anything I can remember."

"Gratification?" almost screamed the two girls.

"Gratification," said George. "If I'd come home and said he'd pleaded guilty and been sent down for five years, you'd have been all depressed. In the third place——"

"Monstrous," said Betty. "Don't laugh, Anne. As if the very thought of that man walking about free didn't make my blood boil."

"It made it run cold last time," observed her husband. "Same principle as a geyser, I suppose . . . Well, as I was saying, in the third place, what was Anthony to you?"

"One of the best," said Betty stoutly. "That's what he was."

Her husband wrinkled his nose.

"My point is that he was a man's pal. He was nice to you because he'd been properly brought up, but . . ."

Mournfully he passed his cup to be refilled.

"Go on," said Betty silkily. "I wouldn't miss this for anything."

Suspiciously George regarded her.

"Well," he said defiantly, "he hadn't much use for women."

Mrs. Alison turned to her sister-in-law and nodded scornfully at her husband.

"Our wiseacre," she said.

"All right," said the chauffeur. "Don't you believe me. He as good as told me so the day before he left, but I suppose that doesn't count."

Gurgling with merriment, his sister rose from the table and, coming behind the speaker, set her hands on his shoulders.

"And I suppose that's why he 'wished to leave the neighbourhood,'" she said, laying her cheek against his. "Betty and I were too much for him. Which reminds me, Bet, you and I ought to go to Bell Hammer and take those books back."

Her brother screwed his head round and looked at her.

"You're not suggesting that Valerie——"

"Sent him away?" said Anne. "Heaven knows. But he's just crazy about her, isn't he, Bet?"

The parlourmaid nodded.

"And she?" queried Alison.

"Loves him to distraction," said Anne.

"Which is why she lets him push off?" said George. "I see. And I suppose, if they'd hated one another like poison, they'd have been married by now. You know, this is too easy."

"Ah," said Betty, with a dazzling smile, "but then, you see, women adore irregularity."

Her husband, who was in the act of drinking, choked with emotion.

That the household was once more without a footman was a hard fact. Major Anthony Lyveden, D.S.O., was gone. His period of service at The Shrubbery had come to an abrupt end upon the previous day. His notice had not expired, but when he received an offer which was conditional upon his immediate departure from Hawthorne, he had laid the facts before Mr. Bumble and left two days later. All efforts to persuade him to leave an address were unavailing. This was a pity, for, ten minutes after he and Patch had left for the station, there had arrived for him a letter from a firm of solicitors that numbered many distinguished clients, and The Honourable Mr. Justice Molehill among them.

Since Anthony will never read that letter, neither will we. We will leave it where it is now, where it will lie, I dare say, until the crack of doom—behind the overmantel in the servants' parlour, gentlemen, with its back to the wall.

Anthony, then, was gone, and Patch with him. The Judge had been gone some time. Mr. Morgan also had left the neighbourhood, and was earning good money in the West End by the simple expedient of wearing the Mons medal, to which, never having seen "service," he was not entitled, and perambulating the gutters of South Kensington with a child in his arms. The child was heavy and cost him sixpence a day, but, as an incentive to charity, it left the rendering of "Abide With Me," upon which Mr. Morgan had previously relied, simply nowhere.

Lady Touchstone and Valerie were still at Bell Hammer. More than once the latter had revived her suggestion of a visit to the

South of France. Each time Valerie had applauded the idea and then promptly switched the conversation on to another topic . . . Women understand women, and, with a sigh, her aunt resigned herself to the prospect of a winter in Hampshire. Return to Town she would not. London was not what it had been, and the vanities of the metropolis fell dismally short of the old pre-War standard. You were robbed, too, openly, wherever you went. With tears in their eyes, shopkeepers offered you stones instead of bread, and charged you for fishes. Besides, unemployment was booming, routs were frequent, rioting was in the air . . . Lady Touchstone decided that, if she was not to snuff the zephyrs of Nice, the smell of the woods of Bell Hammer was good enough for her nostrils.

If Lyveden had lost weight, Miss French had gained none. The blow that had fallen all but a month ago had hit her as hard as him. Yet, of the two, her plight was less evil. Each of them had dropped in their tracks, which is to say that, while Lyveden had fallen upon the rough ground of bare existence, Miss French had fallen into the lap of luxury.

I am prepared to be told that this should have made no difference—that creature comforts cannot minister to a broken heart. But, sirs, the flesh and the spirit are thicker than that. The iron must have entered uncommon deep into the soul for the body no longer to care whether the bath-water run hot or cold.

For all that, the girl was desperately unhappy. That she should have been bracketed with Anne was bad enough : that they should have been wooed in the same nest, to say the least, smacked more of business than of love : that it was her nest, of which, of her love, she had made the man free, was infamous. It was such treatment as she would not have expected at the hands of a counter-jumper—a deserter—a satyr. Possibly a satyr in a weak moment might have fallen so low. But Anthony was not a satyr. And deserters are not, as a rule, recommended for the D.S.O. To suggest that he was a counter-jumper was equally ridiculous. He was a most attractive gallant gentleman. This made his behaviour infinitely more discreditable. It was a sordid, demoralising business . . .

And that, gentlemen, is what a hot bath will do.

Now look on this picture.

Valerie lay as she had flung herself, face downward upon the bed. Save that one sa in slipper had fallen off, she was fully dressed. One bare white arm pillowed her brow, covering her eyes—mercifully. Let us touch that gleaming shoulder. See ? It is cold as ice. That little slipperless foot . . . Cold as any stone. But then it is the month of December, and she has lain so for two hours. Two hours of agony. She can remember every look those steady grey eyes of Lyveden's have ever given her, and in the last two hours she has remembered them all. Inch by inch she has gone over the playground of their hearts : word by word she has recited their conversations : she has gathered great posies of dead blossoms, because they once smelled so sweet : she has trodden the lanes of Memory to her most grievous wounding, because they are still so dear . . .

Then there were other times, when Pride had her in a strait-jacket, and the very thought of Anthony made her eyes blaze.

She had been walking herself out of one of these moods, and was tramping rather wearily through the twilight and up the long drive, when the cough of a motor-horn behind her made her start to one side. The next moment a car flashed past . . .

It was the local doctor's Renault.

Valerie's heart stood still.

The next moment she was running like a deer . . .

The car beat her all ends up, and by the time she had reached the steps, the front door was shut. She pealed the bell frantically . . .

To the footman who answered it—

"What's the matter ?" she panted. "Who's ill ?"

"Miss Alison, miss. I think it's a broken leg. She an' Mrs. Alison 'ad been to tea with 'er ladyship, an', as she was leavin', she——"

"Don't keep saying 'she,'" snapped Valerie. "Say 'Miss Alison.' And—and bring me some fresh tea. In the library."

She swept past the bewildered servant and disappeared.

The mills of God were off.

* * * * *

Twenty-four hours had gone by.

All this time the mills had been grinding steadily, and the grain, which had been awaiting their pleasure for exactly one calendar month, was beginning to disappear. After a while Valerie had come to realise that her pride was to be reduced to powder, and that there was nothing for it but to

submit to the process with the best grace she could. Not every woman would have reasoned so wisely: few would have given to their decision such faithful effect. You will please remember that any reduction of her pride seemed to Valerie extraordinarily unjust. That there was stuff other than pride in the grist never occurred to her.

It was the evening, then, of the day after the accident, and the two girls were alone in the pleasant bedroom whither Anne had been carried the day before, and where she was like to spend the next six weeks of her existence. The patient was wearing one of Valerie's night-gowns and looking very nice in it. She was also smoking one of Valerie's cigarettes, and, so resilient is youth, chattering merrily between the puffs.

"Lady Touchstone was wonderful She knew my leg was broken before I did. Almost before I knew where I was, she had my head in her lap and was telling me to lie quite still and hang on to her hand for all I was worth. 'You'll find it a great help,' she said. 'I know I did. And if you know any bad words, say them.' For all the pain, I couldn't help laughing. And then she told me how she'd broken her leg in the hunting field, and the vicar was the first to get to her, and how she hung on to him and made him feed her with bad language till help arrived. And, when I tried to say I was sorry, she said the butler deserved six months for not having the steps sanded, and asked me, if you and she tried to make me comfortable while I was your guest, if I'd try to forgive you . . ."

"That's the only possible way to look at it," said Valerie. "It's all our servants' fault, and we're only too thankful to be able——"

"You're very sweet," said Anne wistfully. "But to be saddled with me for six weeks——"

"Hush," said Valerie, with a grave smile. "You promised not to talk like that."

Anne Alison sighed.

"It is unfortunate, though," she said. "I can't think what they'll do at The Shrubbery. If only Anthony hadn't just left . . . You knew he'd gone, didn't you?"

Valerie shook her head.

"I knew he was going," she said.

"He left on Monday," said Anne. "We're all heart-broken. He was wonderful to work with, and nobody could help liking him. George is desperate about it. Being a man, you see . . . Besides, they were a lot together. On the car, I mean. Off duty we never saw much of him. He liked being alone. I think I'm the only one he went for a walk with all the time he was there. And then Betty sent him. He'd never seen the view from The Beacon, so I took him. He was bored stiff, and we got soaked coming home, but he was very nice and polite about it. He always was. And now, I suppose——"

"The Beacon?" said Valerie faintly. "Where—where's The Beacon?"

"I don't know what its real name is," said Anne. "We always call it 'The Beacon.' You must know it. That very high place in Red King Walk, where the cliff goes sheer down . . ."

Valerie tried to speak, but no words would come. Something seemed to be gripping her by the throat. The walls of the room, too, were closing in, and there was a strange, roaring noise—like that of mills working . . .

With a terrific effort she fought unconsciousness away . . .

Her—their nest, then, was, after all, inviolate. He had never taken Anne there. Betty had sent him. And—he—had—been bored—stiff . . .

It was as if a mine had been sprung beneath the spot upon which had been dumped her emotions of the last two months, blowing some to atoms, bringing to light others that had lain buried. Out of the wrack, joy, shame, fear fell at her feet—and a sentence out of a letter was staring her in the face.

"*His explanation will shame you, of course, but take the lesson to heart.*"

"I wonder," she said shakily, "if you could give me Major Lyveden's address."

"I would, like a shot," said Anne heartily, "but he wouldn't leave one."

Again the rumble of those labouring mills came swelling out of the silence into a roar that was thunderous, brain-shaking . . . For a moment of time they pounded the understanding mercilessly . . . Then, all of a sudden, the machinery stopped.

The corn was ground.

The sixth story in this series will appear in the next number.

THE "WHY" OF THE WEATHER

By R. BRENARD, F.R.Met.Soc.,
Meteorologist to the London-Paris "Air Express,"
AND
HARRY HARPER,
Technical Secretary of the Civil Aerial Transport Committee

ILLUSTRATED BY GEOFFREY WATSON

"SHALL I take my umbrella?" asked Mr. Brown-Jones, pausing with his hand on the gate of Laburnum Villa.

"No, dear, I shouldn't," said Mrs. Brown-Jones from the doorstep. "It's going to be a beautiful day."

"Don't forget I'm wearing my new hat," said Mr. Brown-Jones doubtfully. His viewpoint, like that of other experienced householders, was tinged by a gentle pessimism.

Obviously he was wearing a new hat—a fine, glossy, brand-new "topper," a hat to be treated seriously.

For a moment affairs hung in the balance. Mr. Brown-Jones almost came back for his umbrella. Mrs. Brown-Jones almost decided that he should take it. She was just stepping back into the hall to get it from the stand, when the voice of Bessie, the maid, calling rather querulously from nether regions, reminded her that this was the day for turning out both the front rooms, and that every moment was precious.

"Don't trouble, dear," she said hastily, being suddenly anxious to get Mr. Brown-Jones off the premises. "It would look silly to carry an umbrella this sunshiny morning."

That settled it. Mr. Brown-Jones, like all good citizens, was sensitive, and to "look silly" all the way from Laburnum Villa to the station was much against his desire.

And suppose you could have told him, as a point in favour of an umbrella, that somewhere near the Gulf of Mexico, four thousand miles from where he stood, and days before he had bought his new hat, what meteorologists call a "depression" had formed, and had begun to move towards Europe, would he have paid much attention to you? Scarcely. He would have been polite, but he would have been indifferent. Even if you had mentioned that this "depression" was now approaching England at the speed of an express train, it is doubtful whether he would have regarded the information as significant to himself. Yet it was.

What is a "depression"? Does it take its name from the effect the weather it produces has on our spirits? Hardly. It means atmospherically just what the word implies—a valley in the air.

Picture the earth covered as it is by a belt or layer of atmosphere. Then imagine that for some reason, which science cannot explain even now, a depression or valley forms in this atmospheric sea. Into this "depression" move winds from all directions. They flow into it, rising as they do so, and their expansion as they ascend causes them to cool rapidly. This cooling process condenses the moisture they contain into the form of clouds. These clouds become denser and denser. Then the moisture with which they are overflowing begins to fall as rain.

As a "depression" sweeps thousands of miles over land and sea, its approach is accompanied by signs known to meteorologists, but unobserved by ordinary folk.

Suppose, touching Mr. Brown-Jones on the arm, we had pointed out that the fair clearness of the sky was being marred already by the appearance of high, feathery clouds, would he have grasped the significance of such a portent? It is unlikely. And, in any case, his thoughts were now elsewhere. As he walked to the station, he was revolving in his mind an important

letter he had to get off by that day's mail to an agent abroad.

He did, however, receive rather a shock when he stepped on to the railway platform at Homers End.

The station-master there, having time on his hands, makes a study of the weather. He is not scientific—far from it—but he owns a barometer, which he taps frequently. He finds its risings and fallings provide a topic of conversation between himself and sundry regular passengers.

This morning he greeted Mr. Brown-Jones with a doubtful smile and a shake of the head.

"Ought to have brought your umbrella, sir," he said.

The remark annoyed Mr. Brown-Jones.

"Good gracious, why?" he asked petulantly. "It's a lovely morning."

But the station-master shook his head. "Too good by far," said he in his *rôle* of weather prophet. "Too good to last."

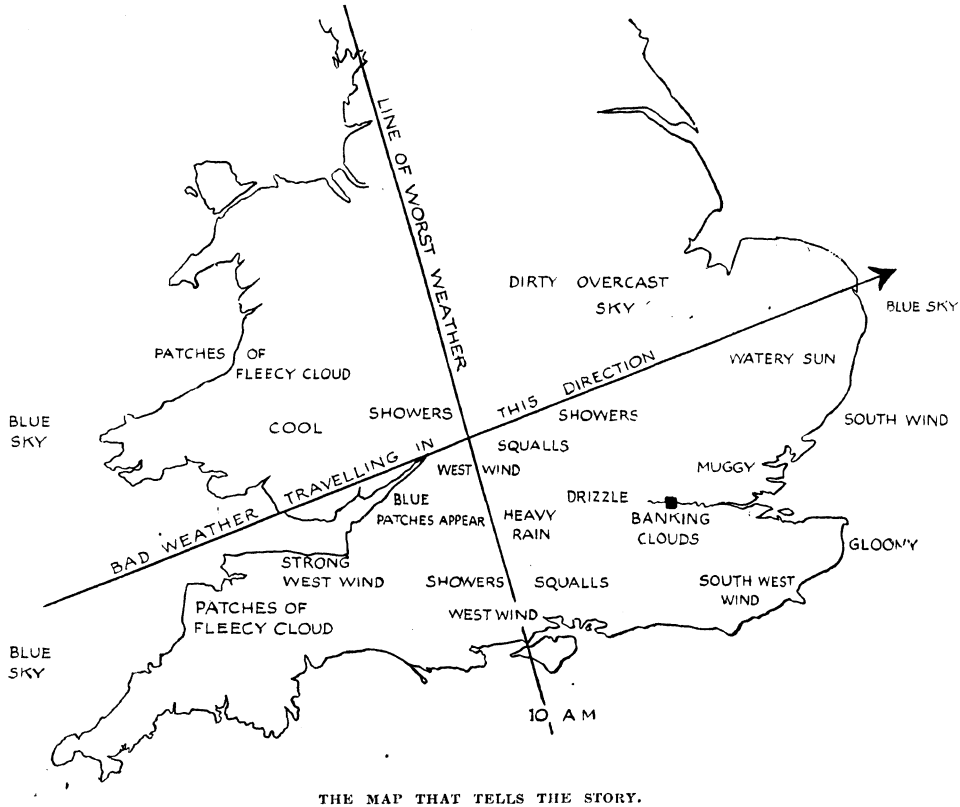
Then—a sort of Parthian shot as the train rounded the bend: "The barometer's falling."

A disturbed mind had Mr. Brown-Jones as he got into the train. Even the acquisition of his usual corner seat did not quite restore his equanimity. Heavy is the responsibility of a new hat.

His acquaintances in the train, refusing in their ignorance to entertain any doubt as to the weather, certainly cheered him up a little. And the sun still shone.

But neither Mr. Brown-Jones, nor his friends, nor the station-master at Homers End, had the weather wisdom to appreciate the significance of that fine, thin haze which was beginning already to impair the sunlight. Nor could they read the warning of those gathering clouds on the south-west sky.

The station-master, it is true, left more or less in lonely state till the arrival of the 10.10 "down," tapped his barometer again, to find it falling fast.



THE MAP THAT TELLS THE STORY.

Here, represented graphically, is the weather we experience during the approach, passage, and departure of a typical "depression" which moves in from the Atlantic, passes over southern England, and makes its exit over the North Sea. There are three distinct phases: (1) The weather in front of the depression; (2) the bad weather at its centre line; and (3) the clearing weather which tells us that the worst has passed.

Apart from the barometer, or gathering clouds, a "depression" tells the tale of its movement by changes in the wind. Imagine yourself on the platform at Homers End, a few miles south-west of London. The "depression" is now bearing down rapidly on the Metropolis. At the moment with which we are concerned, its centre—the point where the weather is worst—is, we will say, somewhat not far off the Isle of Wight.

We look up at the smoke from the chimneys. The wind is south. Now, it is characteristic of a "depression" that the wind blows round it in a reverse way to the movement of the hands of a clock. If you are standing, as we assume you are, just in front of the "depression," with the wind south, its actual movement can be estimated by watching the veering of the wind.

This particular "depression" is moving, perhaps, at as much as fifty miles an hour. What happens, therefore, as you watch the wind? Why, it begins to veer a little west of south, and it continues to do so as the "depression" passes over. It goes round to such an extent that, while the wind is south along the front edges of the "depression," it will be northerly at the rear of it; and when the centre is moving over where you stand, the rain-squalls will be driven by violent gusts which are coming almost from due west.

When you are weather-wise, you can discern the approach, arrival, and departure of any "depression" by this anti-clockwise movement of the wind. Southerly as the "depression" bears down on you, it will be nearly west as the worst of the weather passes. Then, as it clears with final showers, the smoke from the chimneys will be north or north-west.

All this was a closed book to Mr. Brown-Jones, though when he emerged from London Bridge Station, on his arrival in Town, he was conscious of the weather, owing to the fact that it seemed to have become "muggy." This he did not connect with impending catastrophe, though, if he had only known it, a stuffy, rather moist heat is a sure sign that a "depression" is close at hand.

Again, when he sat down at his desk, Mr. Brown-Jones was aware of a certain lassitude of brain, which he himself attributed to "a touch of liver," but for which the imminence of the "depression" was solely to blame.

Business, however, is business, and foreign mails wait for no man. So Mr. Brown-Jones rang for his secretary, and plunged heroically into that letter to the agent abroad. There were new terms to suggest to him, and Mr. Brown-Jones was anxious to represent them in an attractive light.

When he had finished dictating he observed from his diary that he had an appointment just after eleven with a firm in Victoria Street. This meant that he must be getting along. His eyes roved to his new hat on its peg; after which, by a simple association of ideas, he began to think apprehensively of the weather.

Mr. Brown-Jones peered out of his window across a vista of roofs. In his field of vision was a chimney, the smoke from which told its tale to those who had eyes to see. From south the wind had shifted to south-west.

But, engrossed again with his purely personal affairs, Mr. Brown-Jones hastened umbrella-less to the Bank.

"Full inside, sir," said the conductor of the No. 11 'bus.

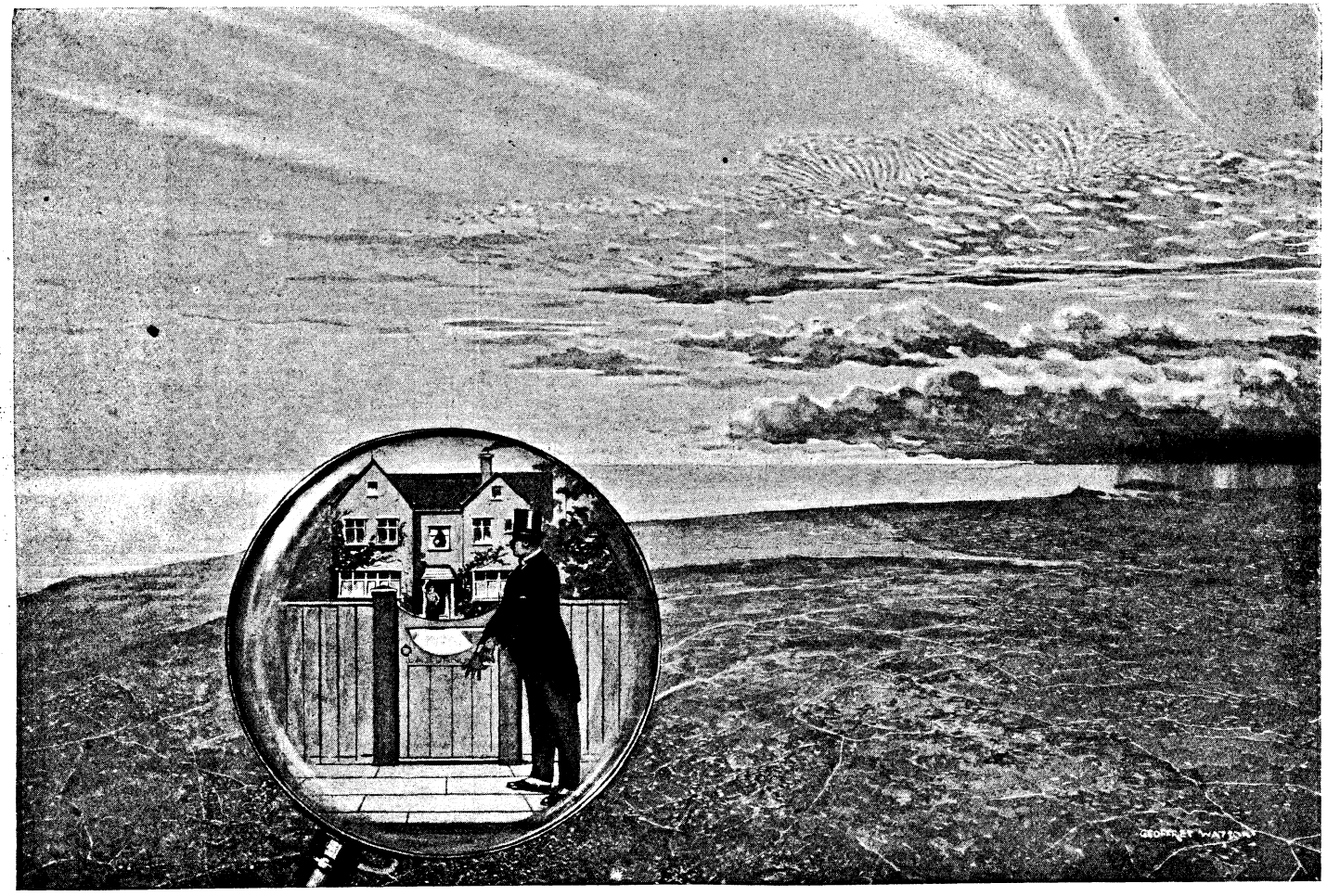
Being now in a hurry, and reassured by a watery gleam of sunshine which seemed to percolate down from nowhere in particular, Mr. Brown-Jones ran up the steps and took a seat on top.

Even before the omnibus reached Ludgate Circus he felt he had made a mistake. That elusive gleam of sun had vanished. The wind appeared to blow suddenly with an unpleasant, threatening force. The air seemed laden with a warning chill. Mr. Brown-Jones, painfully conscious of his exposed position and his new hat, never thought a motor-'bus could go so slowly or stop so irritatingly. It seemed to him that everybody who got on wanted to get off again at once.

Though one must confess that Mr. Brown-Jones had been indiscreet—even foolish—it was nothing less than a tragedy that the arrival of the "depression" over Trafalgar Square should have coincided so exactly with the crossing of it on the unprotected 'bus-top of Mr. Brown-Jones in his new hat. Fate was more than unkind—she was brutal.

What happened was calamitous. There was a sudden, tearing gust, which, sweeping up from the direction of the Mall, seemed to fill the Square with a roar of wind.

Mr. Brown-Jones clutched convulsively at his hat. As he did so, it seemed as though somebody up above must have pulled a string and emptied some mighty cistern. To say the rain came down in a sheet was



WHAT A "DEPRESSION" LOOKS LIKE.

Here, based on meteorological data, an attempt is made to show pictorially what an Atlantic "depression" would look like if we were able to ascend high above London and obtain a bird's-eye view of its invasion of our shores. First, looking south-west, there are the light high clouds, then the thickening lower masses, while behind them, much lower still, we see those great dark rain-clouds at the centre of the "depression" which are pouring down their torrents near the Isle of Wight. And meanwhile Mr. Brown-Jones, departing umbrella-less in his new tall hat from Laburnum Villa, is quite unconscious of impending catastrophe.

to put it mildly. Borne on the wind with a stinging lash, it swept venemously across the top of that ill-fated 'bus. Mr. Brown-Jones clung to the brim of his hat with one hand and held up the collar of his coat with the other. He felt numbed—paralysed. He did not seem to have the will-power to jump up and struggle off the 'bus-top as the vehicle floundered down Whitehall. It was not, in fact, till it came to a jerking halt outside the post office in Parliament Street that he scrambled down the steps.

The sight of the post office stirred him to sudden action. Sprinting in, he seized a telegraph form and wrote upon it feverishly, and this is the wire he sent :—

"Brown-Jones, Laburnum Villa, Homers End, Surrey.—Send umbrella and mackintosh first train London Bridge addressed me be called for."

Out on the pavement again, he felt he was far too ruffled, far too distraught, to face that interview in Victoria Street. Besides —and now he nerved himself to pause in a sheltering doorway and inspect the ruin of what, until a few minutes before, had been a new tall hat.

That beautiful, silky, glossy nap, smooth as—— But why dwell ghoulishly on the agony of the moment ? There are griefs over which it is only decent to draw a veil. You, reader, may know—perhaps have known—what havoc a heavy shower, driven slantwise by the wind, can do when it impinges on the virgin smoothness of a new tall hat.

Let it merely be said, then, that Mr. Brown-Jones's tone was so sepulchral, so charged with woe, when he rang up his office from a call-box in the District station, that Henry, the office-boy, taking down the message he was to send through at once, cancelling Mr. Brown-Jones's appointment, experienced a thrill of apprehensive dismay.

Meanwhile Mr. Brown-Jones himself, making his way into a first-class District coach in a train bound for the Mansion House, took off his hat again and forced himself to gaze more firmly at it. Nay, by an effort which was heroic, he attempted, with fingers none too dexterous, to smooth back some of the raddled nap.

At the Bank it was still raining. A pall seemed hanging over the City. Faces on all sides, appearing over coat-collars, were wet and miserable. Some men added insult to injury by jostling Mr. Brown-Jones with the rims of their umbrellas. He arrived at his office in a mood of sullen, bitter stoicism, passing without a word into his room, and issuing thence shortly afterwards on his way to lunch, merely pausing in the outer office for a moment to tell Henry to meet at London Bridge the next train from Homers End, and bring back to the office the mackintosh and umbrella.

The scene in the restaurant which Mr. Brown-Jones patronised was not comforting. There is an old saying that our moods are "servile to all the skiey influences." Mr. Brown-Jones would have endorsed that. His lunch was, as a matter of fact, quite spoilt. For one thing, he had put his hat on the rack above him, and kept looking up at it, in unhappy fascination, to note the ravishing effects of that rain-squall in Trafalgar Square. And then the doors of the restaurant, opening constantly, let in gusts of cold, wet air. The waiters, too, were irritable, and Mr. Brown-Jones's table acquaintances—one with a cold in his head —took a morbid view of the general trade position. And all the time the rain rattled like castanets on the glass roof.

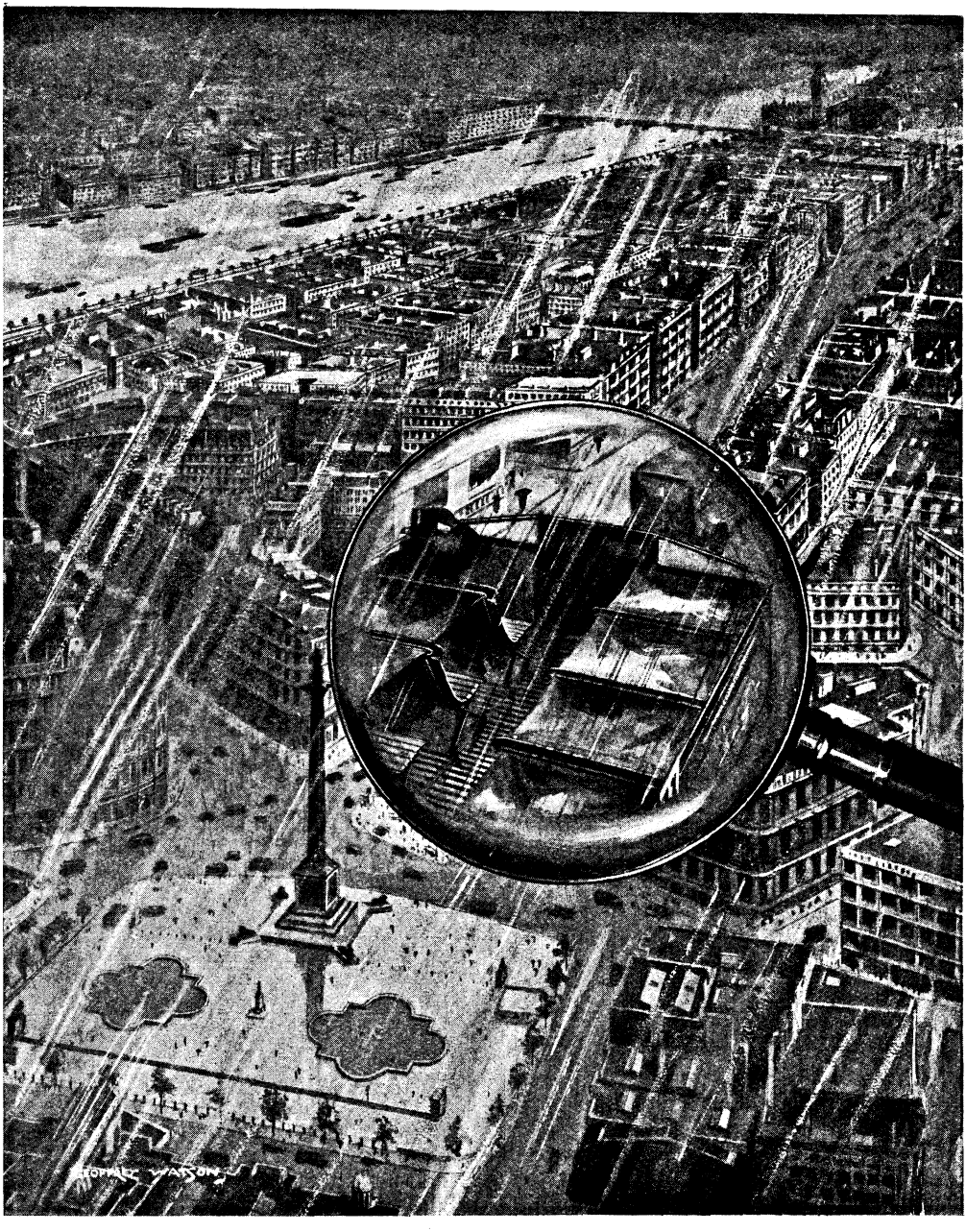
After lunch Mr. Brown-Jones had unmistakable symptoms of indigestion, and his taxicab on the way back to the office was one of those decrepit vehicles we seem to encounter only on very wet days or after midnight. The rain had actually oozed in through its badly-fitting doors, and Mr. Brown-Jones sat in frozen misery.

Therefore one could hardly expect him, on emerging at his office, to be in a mood to discover reassuring weather signs. But, all the same, they were there. The wind, as weathercocks and chimneys showed, had ceased to blow so blusterously from the west, and was veering till gusts came from a quarter distinctly north of west. The centre of the "depression," travelling fast, had already done its worst to London, and was now sending the good folk of Essex cringing to shelter from its cruel lash of rain.

Grimly pessimistic, unresponsive to any softening influence, Mr. Brown-Jones seated himself at his desk and drew towards him the letter to the agent abroad. Ah, just as he might have expected ! Catching his jaundiced eye almost immediately was a typist's error. He raised his eyebrows in silent self-pity. His thoughts, taking an even deeper tinge of melancholy, fastened, as was their habit at such moments, on an Income Tax form with which he had been wrestling for many days.

Could man plumb deeper depths of woe ?

Yet, in a literal sense, the clouds were breaking. Had Mr. Brown-Jones raised his



THE SQUALL SWEEPS TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Travelling at fifty miles an hour, the very centre of the "depression"—the point, that is to say, where the weather is worst—rolls up from the south-west over Trafalgar Square, with violent gusts of wind and drenching rain, just as the unfortunate Mr. Brown-Jones, his new tall hat exposed to all the fury of the elements, passes across the square on the top of a 'bus.

head, he would have seen, in the sky almost opposite his window, such a rift in the gloom as showed, for one cheerful moment, a glimpse of the purest blue beyond. A clearing shower, following hard on the heels of the centre of the "depression," was, it is true, still falling, but every moment the weather was mending.

Mr. Brown-Jones, however, glooming at his desk, read that letter for a third time, thinking how badly he had expressed himself. It required some startling incident to shake him out of himself, and that incident duly came.

The door opened furtively, and Henry, the office-boy, none too sure of his

welcome, appeared with Mr. Brown-Jones's mackintosh and umbrella.

Mr. Brown-Jones looked up with a heavy frown. Henry wilted visibly. And it was just at that moment that the miracle happened.

Mr. Brown-Jones became aware of a sudden surprising radiance. He blinked his eyes foolishly as a golden gleam smote across them. Henry, the office-boy, saw that sombre room lit up suddenly and transformed.

It was a ray of sunshine! It seemed to broaden and grow more brilliant. And slowly, as though some magic hand had been passed across it, the face of Mr. Brown-Jones changed from a frown into a smile.

Turning his eyes on Henry, standing there in the full sunshine, clasping that umbrella and mackintosh, which had in a flash become foolish rather than desirable, Mr. Brown-Jones leaned back in his chair and laughed heartily. Really, it was too ridiculous! His laugh deepened. The office had not heard Mr. Brown-Jones laugh like that for a long time. And mingling with his was the shriller laugh of Henry, the office-boy, afraid of his employer no longer, but leaning against the door, still clinging to the umbrella and mackintosh, and shaking with a mirth that brought tears to his eyes.

The sun was shining by now so strongly it warmed the whole room. But its rays seemed, with a rare discretion, to avoid that corner where Mr. Brown-Jones's tall hat hung on its peg.

* * * * *

Going home, Mr. Brown-Jones sprang boldly on to the top of a 'bus. He rode triumphantly over London Bridge. Once or twice, it is true, he thought of his hat, picturing what it must look like in that penetrating evening sun. But the invincible recoil in his spirits was proof even against this. After all, he had a second-best hat, and the local hatter would soon make this one all right. Why trouble over trifles? The main thing was that the sun was shining.

There was a piece of extravagance Mr. Brown-Jones allowed himself on high days or holidays, or when recovering from some crisis of business life; and, deciding that to-day was one of those days, he paused at the kiosk in the station and acquired a long and slender cigar, lighting it with the calm of a connoisseur.

At the bookstall he bought a humorous journal, and laughed aloud at one of the jokes. Out beyond the station roof a piece of evening sky was visible. It was calm, quiet, serenely blue. Oh, English climate! Oh, British weather! Transformation scenes at the pantomime are as nothing to what you can do in the course of an hour or so.

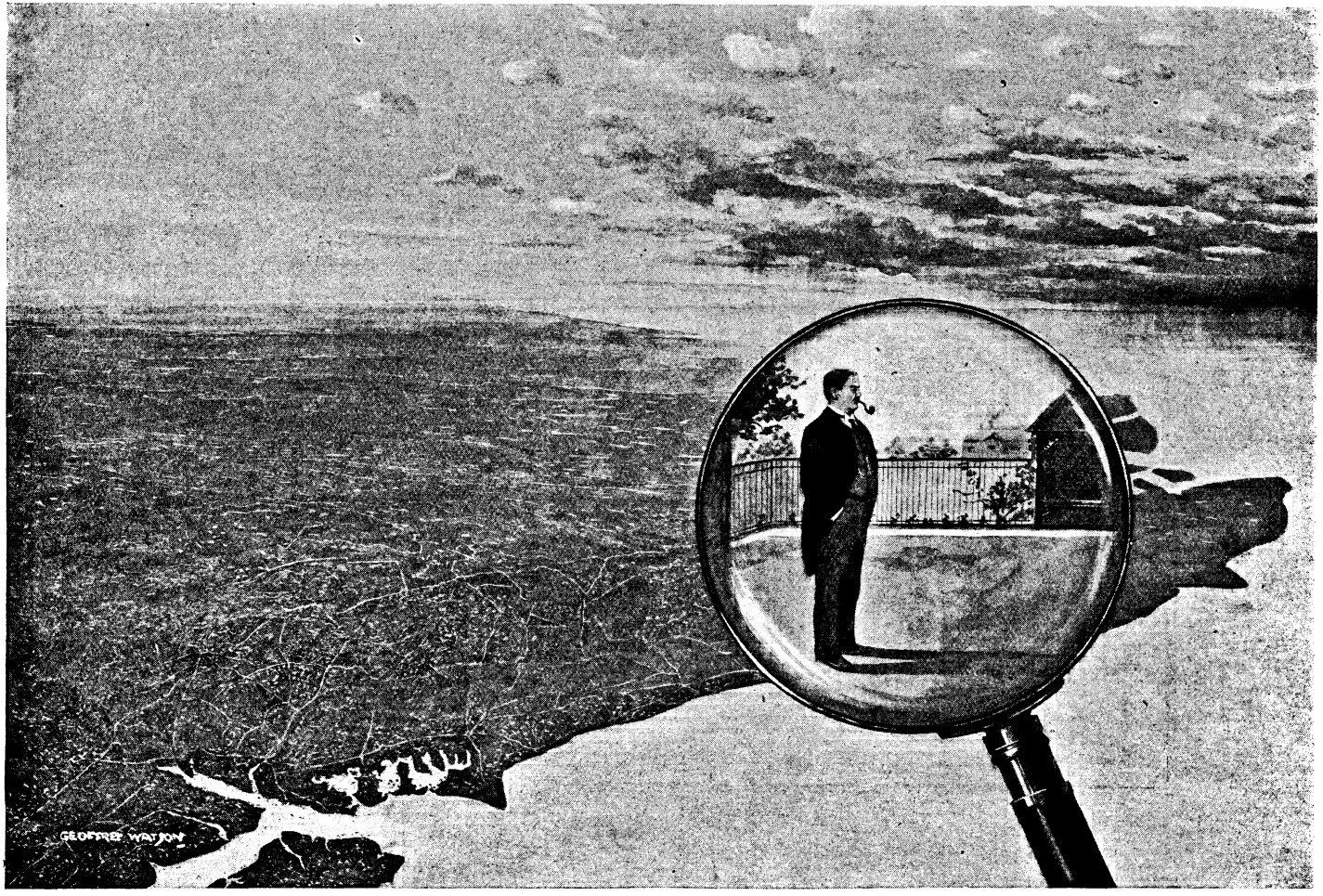
Through crisp, cool air Mr. Brown-Jones walked home from the station. He had never felt it more invigorating. This, had he known it, is a feature of weather at the back of a "depression"; and, had he noted the smoke from the chimneys, he would have seen that the evening breeze, which would soon become rather chilly, was blowing from a direction almost due north.

Then—well, let us tread lightly in realms of domestic bliss. There was Mrs. Brown-Jones at the gate, with just that smile Mr. Brown-Jones recognised as a sign that things at Laburnum Villa had gone well that day. Both the rooms had, as a matter of fact, been turned out and put straight again before Mrs. Brown-Jones and Bessie, the maid, had sat down to their respective teas in snuggery and kitchen. Also—but perhaps this is too intimately domestic—Mrs. Brown-Jones had in her mind the solidly comforting thought that the butcher had promised a specially good joint of beef for Sunday.

After dinner Mr. Brown-Jones strolled into the garden, smoking a favourite pipe. The air was still delightful, though it now bore a perceptible chill. Everything in the garden was lovely—or so it seemed to Mr. Brown-Jones.

Where was that treacherous "depression"? What had become of it? Well, had Mr. Brown-Jones been able to take his seat, say, in an aeroplane and ascend thousands of feet high in the upper air, he might, by looking eastward towards the North Sea, have glimpsed its retreating outskirts. He might have seen the clear air give place again to cloud, the clouds thicken, the wind change, until, somewhere out there over the cold North Sea, the centre of that "depression" was pouring down its rain just as it had on London not so many hours before.

But sufficient for the day is the "depression" thereof. Mr. Brown-Jones was in no mood to follow that affliction as it raced eastward over Europe. He turned, rather, to a restful contemplation of his neat back lawn.



PEACE AFTER THE STORM.

Rushing north-east with the speed of an express train, the "depression" crosses Essex, and, by the time Mr. Brown-Jones has dined in the evening and is smoking a favourite pipe in the garden of Laburnum Villa, is venting the worst of its fury above the waters of the cold North Sea.

THE EXPLANATION

I HEARD your gate a-creaking
As I passed along the street,
And I thought that it was speaking
And saying: "Oh, she's sweet! Don't you
think that she is sweet?"

I heard the rooks a-crying
As they swept across the sky,
And they asked: "What sets you sighing
When there's no need to sigh—not a bit
o' need to sigh?"

I heard my heart a-beating;
It was saying: "Did you hear?
Won't you go and give her greeting,
When the gate says she's a dear,
When the busy birds have told you that
there's nothing for to fear?"

But my foolish heart misgave me,
'Twas so obstinate and froward;
Though the gate, it creaked to save me,
And the birds, they called me coward.
So, perhaps, you'll understand,
Dearest lady in the land.

LEOPOLD SPERO.

THE TREASURE

By RALPH COBINO

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

DENNISON was sitting alone in the garden of a country inn. On the other side of the wall he could hear the stir and bustle of a fair day in the village street—the tramp of horses' feet, lowing cattle, the shrill voices of stall-keepers advertising their wares. A little lower down the street a man was singing comic songs to a banjo accompaniment. There was a carpenter's shop close to the inn, and the sound of hammering came above the noise of the street, as persistent as the voice of running water or wind in the tree-tops.

The village was set in a valley, with the hills like sentinels about it. Dennison's gaze went idly to these hills. They were tree-stocked and beautiful. He noticed a house built high above the village in a little clearing of the trees. The sun fell full on the windows, as Dennison looked, so that the house showed vivid against its dark background.

The landlady of the inn came into the garden to speak to Dennison. She had been lady's maid in a family who travelled, and she had a few tricks of gesture caught from vivacious foreigners. Travel had widened her horizon, so that she looked at life with shrewd, observant eyes.

"I should like dinner early," Dennison said, in answer to her question. "Afterwards I shall go for a walk. Your hills look tempting. Pity you have only one house built on the heights." He nodded towards the gleaming windows. "Who lives there?"

"Mr. Cuthbert Lee. He took the house last autumn. Before that it had been empty for several years. It's too quiet for most people's liking."

"Cuthbert Lee?" Dennison felt the name familiar, touching a chord of memory.

"He has travelled. Not mere holiday weeks." The landlady dismissed such travellers with a shrug. "He has lived in other countries until he caught the spirit of them." She met Dennison's astonished eyes, and ended, half laughing: "I was out of my own country for eight years at a stretch once, and I know how you may feel the spell."

There was a temporary lull in the street noises outside. The man with the banjo had drifted to the other end of the village; the itinerant vendors despaired for a time of getting new customers. The noise of hammering from the carpenter's shop was the only sound that persisted. It was like the monotonous throb of an engine, Dennison thought.

"Cuthbert Lee?" Dennison was still hunting amongst stray rags of memory.

"A short man with dark eyes. He has the look of one who has had experiences, been lifted out of the common rut." Mrs. Hunt ended with a shrug. She realised that such comments were not usual on the lips of landladies of country inns. She had a gift of understanding, and forgot at times to hide her light under a bushel.

"I remember him." Dennison got to his feet, staring at the house on the hill. "At college—a short dark man. Yes—yes, a dare-devil kind of fellow." He glanced sideways at the landlady. "Experiences? He was the kind who'd have those."

She shook her head. "I mean inner experiences—something to stir the soul, not lion hunting or mountain climbing."

Dennison was silently amazed. This woman had a mind strangely above her kitchen and accounts.

"He doesn't often come down into the valley. Occasionally he comes to see Bruce, the village carpenter, and to church on Sunday." She began to move away. "Your dinner will be ready early. You would like coffee in the garden afterwards?"

"Yes." Dennison nodded. He added: "Has there been a death in the village? Although it's a fair day, the carpenter is working."

"There has been no death. Bruce rarely stops his work." She hesitated, seemed about to say something, decided on silence,

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and disappeared towards the kitchen. Her silence held a faint suggestion of something secret.

Dennison strolled over to the garden gate, opened it, and stepped outside. The crowd had formed a circle round a Punch and Judy show at the far end of the village. The showman's raucous voice and the laughter of the onlookers were softened by distance, mere background to the rhythmic hammering in the carpenter's shop. Dennison followed the last sound, came to an open shed, and looked inside. The carpenter's head was bent, intent on his work. Presently, realising the presence of a stranger, he lifted his eyes and met Dennison's.

"You work whilst your neighbours play," Dennison said. "The sound of hammering drew me by sheer force of contrast."

The man laid his tools down and came to the door of the shed. At sight of his face Dennison's interest was caught, held in bondage to the look in the man's eyes. A man with a secret! The certainty lighted a quick flame of interest in Dennison's mind. They spoke of the weather, of the fair—trifles that kept the tongue busy and left the mind free. It was a strong face—Dennison fastened first on that idea of strength—and it was a face that had held possibilities of evil. That last seemed to be thrust on Dennison's mind from outside, as though it were inherent in the atmosphere of the workshop. It was the face of a man who had not always been as he was now. Dennison felt his interest grow, a flame fanned by the man's personality and the certainty of some unusual happening in his life.

"Here, in this village, there can't always be a press of work for you," Dennison suggested.

"I make things for a city firm when I have time—boxes, bookstands." He drew back into the workshop with a little gesture of invitation. Dennison followed him, his nostrils full of the pungent odour of freshly-sawn wood. The floor was littered with shavings. A sudden gust of wind, coming through the open door, stirred and lifted them like fallen leaves about a forest path.

"I call these my holiday tasks," Bruce said. He pointed to a shelf full of boxes, book-rests, children's toys. "Sometimes I work far into the night." He might have been a poet speaking of his inspiration, or an artist thinking of his canvas. He had the uplifted expression of an enthusiast. Yet the lines of his face were coarsely moulded—thick lips, a heavy jaw. You would have expected to see him in a street brawl with ready fists. Only when you met his eyes something gave the lie to the rest of him.

Through the open doorway of the shed there was a peep of the hills and of the white house set in the midst of the trees. The carpenter's eyes lifted to it for a moment.

"I was telling my landlady that it was a pity only one house had been built on the hill," Dennison said. "What a superb view there must be of the valley! I believe I once knew the man who lives there—years ago, at college."

Dennison was almost startled at the alteration in the man's face. The expression changed from mere polite attention to something eager, alert. His interest was like the quick leap of sword from scabbard.

"You knew Mr. Cuthbert Lee?"

"In his college days. Since then our ways haven't crossed. I heard that he travelled most of the time, had lived in the East for years—in desert places, making friends of the Arabs. A wonderful time it must have been."

"Wonderful!"

The word vibrated, seemed heavy with meaning. Dennison turned quickly.

"You almost sound as if you had shared the experience."

The carpenter's eyes lowered. He moved presently to his bench and fingered his tools there. When he spoke again, it was of his work, his love for this fashioning of things from wood.

"Sometimes I have the queerest fancies when I'm working—how the wood was grown in the forest, with the wind and the rain and the passing seasons for company." He lifted his head quickly, looking at Dennison. "I'd rather be a carpenter than a king on his throne." His hands moved amongst his tools again, and presently, as Dennison walked away, the familiar music of the workshop followed him.

The landlady was in her office as he passed the door. He paused on the threshold.

"I strolled up the street and had a look at your carpenter. What a singular face!"

She came to the door. "Yes, isn't it? Calm after storm—does that describe it?"

"Yes." Dennison nodded approval. "Also a sense of secrecy. There is something he knows that the rest of us don't."

The landlady looked at Dennison intently. That in her which was of a fine essence of understanding was on the alert.

"And the knowledge has made him what he is?" she suggested.

"In startling contrast to what he *was?*" Dennison asked quickly.

"*Startling.*"

She let the word stand alone. It was like a lamp held high in a place of shadows.

"Has he been abroad much? In the East, in desert places, for instance?"

"Abroad? Never. Hardly ever away from this village, save for a few days in the nearest city in his boyhood."

Dennison involuntarily turned his head towards the open window, to the slope of the hills, to the house set on the hillside. When he had mentioned the East in connection with Cuthbert Lee's travels, the carpenter had almost the manner of one who had shared the experience. "*Wonderful!*" He recalled the intonation of the man's voice as he spoke. There was a link between these two men—Dennison felt certain of it. A sentence of the landlady's rang in his mind: "He doesn't often come down into the valley. Occasionally he comes to see Bruce, the carpenter."

His meal over, Dennison went out into the early summer evening. He passed to the end of the village street, came to the path that curved up to the hills, and began to mount it. Presently the village lay at his feet, with the river a silver ribbon stretching across the valley. He was still near enough to distinguish detail—the inn with its garden sloping to the river bank, the carpenter's shed on the other side of the wall. A curve in the path hid them from sight, until a higher bend showed them dimmed by distance.

As he climbed, Dennison was recalling college days and the part Cuthbert Lee had played in them. Half-forgotten details came back to him. A reckless living in to-day without thought of to-morrow—a man ruled by impulse—a medley of phrases came to him to describe the man as he remembered him. Occasionally, as the years passed, he had heard of his wanderings in other lands—in the East, with strange, lonely years in desert places.

Dennison came to the house and stood for a minute before opening the gate. The windows were low to the ground, and set wide to the air of the summer night. The garden was full of lilies, dipping and swaying at the bidding of the wind, like swinging censers before a shrine.

An old brass knocker hung on the door. In the act of raising his hand to it, Dennison paused, listening. But it was only the wind in the tree branches that had mimicked the sound of whispering voices. He was lifting his hand to the knocker again, when a voice came from the open window at his right.

"Dennison! By all that's strange, it's *Dennison!*" Steps came along the passage, and the door was flung wide.

"One glance at your face, as you came up the path, carried me back fifteen years. You haven't changed, save for a grey hair or two." Lee glanced up quickly, meeting the other's scrutiny. "I don't suppose you could say the same of me?"

"I couldn't," Dennison said frankly. "If you hadn't proved your identity by remembering me, I should have thought a similarity of names had misled me. And yet"—Dennison looked at the other keenly—"it *is* Cuthbert Lee."

Lee led the way to his sitting-room and pushed two chairs to the open window. "You're the first link with the old days I have chanced upon since I came back."

Behind the prosaic stuff of their talk together Dennison felt wonder grow in his mind, and the wonder was born, not only of the change in Lee, but of a sense of something unusual in the atmosphere of the house itself.

When they had exhausted memories of college days, Lee spoke of his wanderings. He had a knack of verbal description. Listening, Dennison saw desert places, vivid in the sun; heard the pad of camels' feet on the sand; saw Bedouin tribes crossing the desert; heard strange melodies with a throbbing accompaniment like the persistent beating of a heart. He saw the desert moonlit, with a clump of trees in a distant oasis sharply etched against the horizon. And all the time that sound like the beating of a heart——

Dennison came back to the present with a jerk.

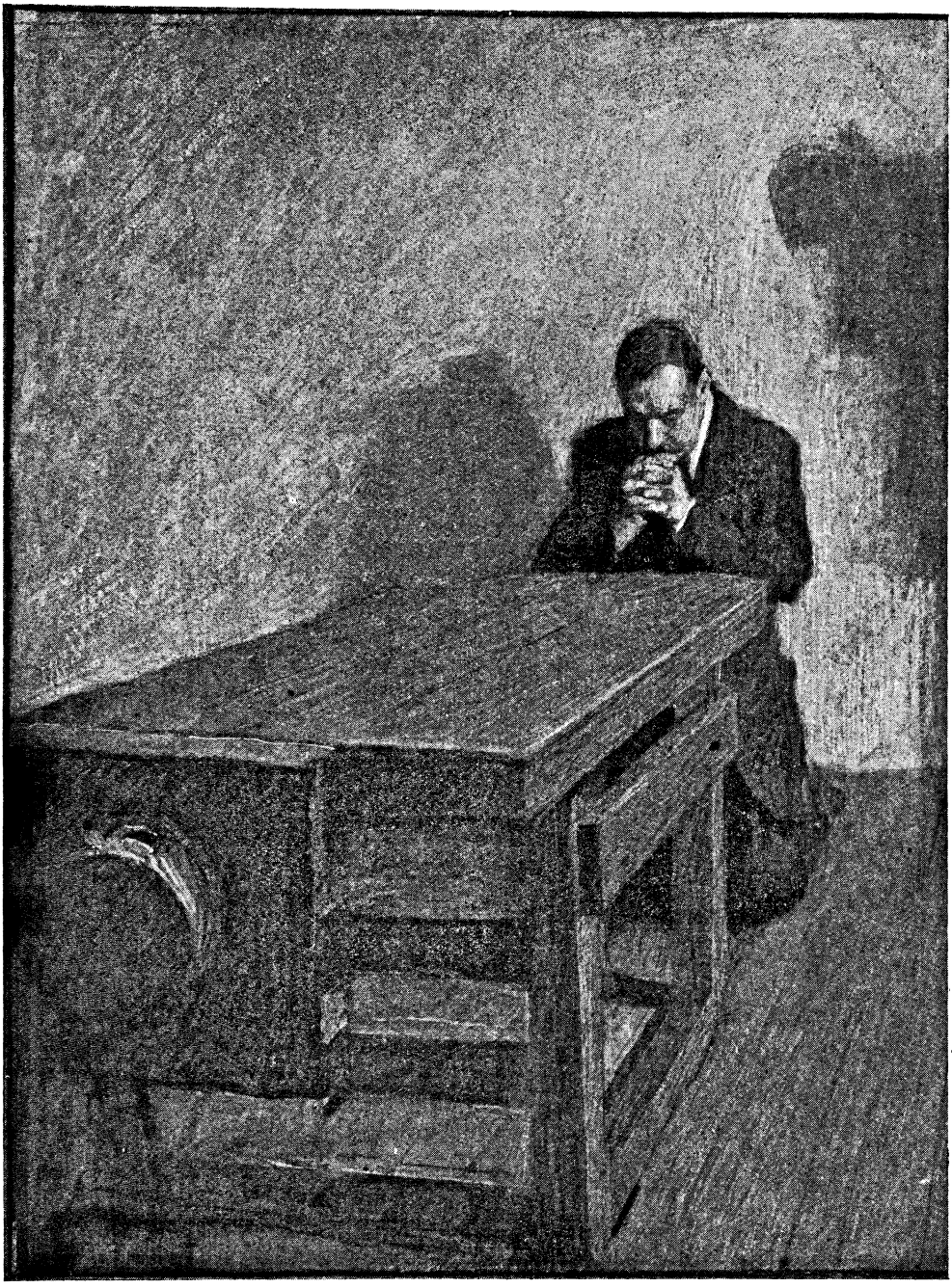
"What's that sound—a kind of rhythmic beating?"

Lee pointed to the open window and the valley beneath. The roofs of the village were faintly blurred in the quick-falling dusk.

"It's the far-away sound of hammering in the carpenter's shop. In certain directions of the wind it can be heard clearly up here."

It was like a calling voice from the valley, setting the still air of the summer night vibrating.

"I went to see the carpenter this afternoon," Dennison said. "A strange personality."



"He looked neither to right nor left, but went straight

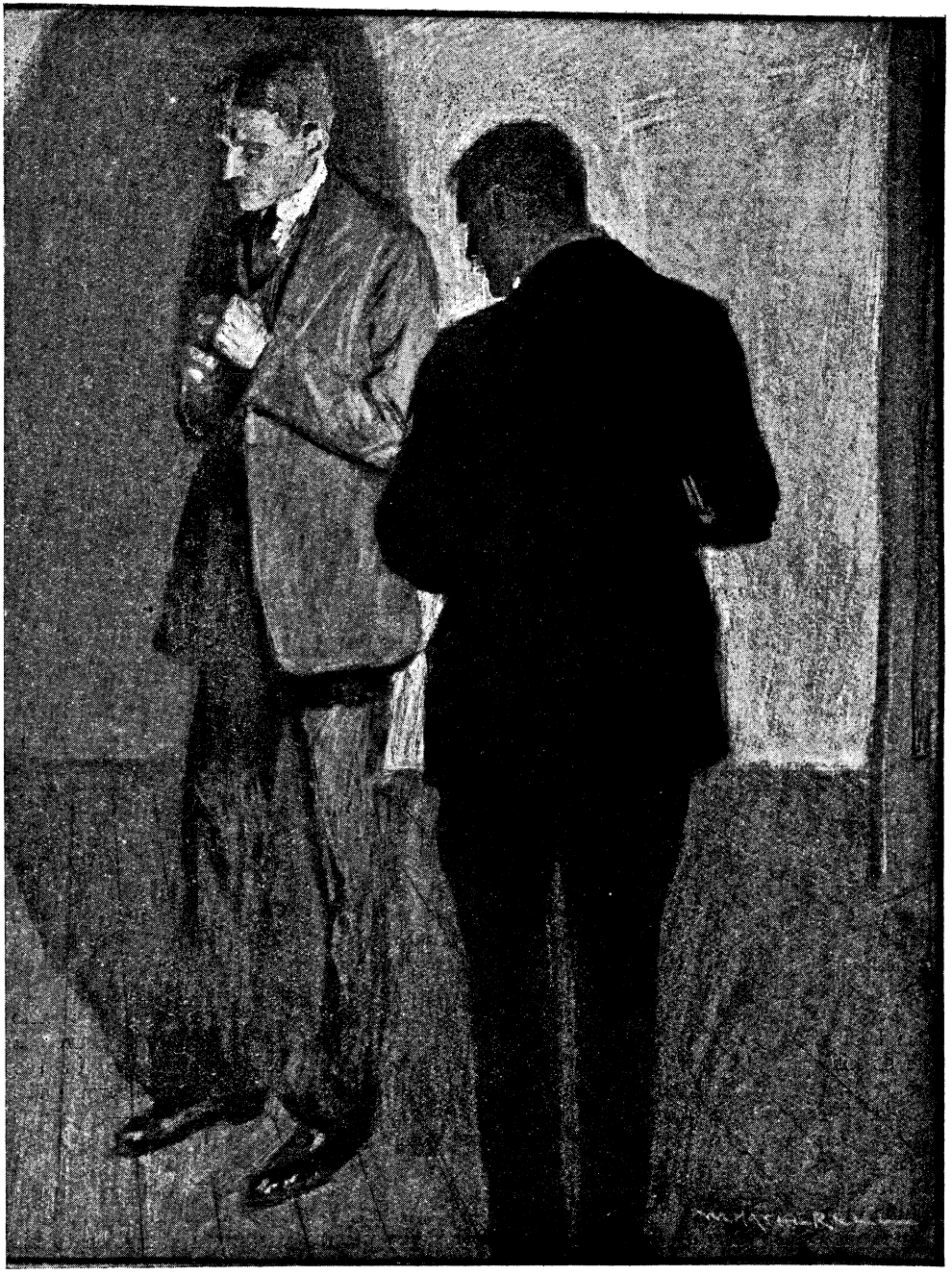
"Strange?" Lee was bending forward in his chair.

"A curious mixture of storm and calm. And you felt he was a man with a secret."

"You sensed that?" There was quick interest in Lee's voice.

"It was present as surely as the pungent odour of shavings on the floor of his workshop."

Outside in the garden the wind was stirring the tree branches in a presage of coming storm. Banks of lilies showed luminous from the shadows. Far away on the skyline the rim of a rising moon came like a silver crescent. Stars began to show in the



to the carpenter's bench and knelt before it."

arch of the sky. The little house on the hill was girt about with the wonder of the evening.

Dennison broke into a lengthy pause.

"The man has a strain of poetry in him. The way he spoke of his work showed that. Amazing! It was like finding flowers growing in a coal mine." Dennison smiled at the crude simile as he uttered it, yet something about the man had given the lie to the coarse shell of his body.

In another part of the house a clock struck the hour, and Dennison rose from his chair.

"I mustn't keep the people at the inn sitting up for me. In country places they believe in early hours."

The two men walked out into the garden and down the path to the gate. Presently Dennison was going at a swinging pace down towards the valley. His thoughts moved as rapidly as his feet. Cuthbert Lee as he had known him in his college days and as he had seen him to-night! The change was so vital that they might have been two men who had inhabited the same body. The desert—Dennison's thoughts went to it intuitively. There had been some happening in the desert that had fashioned this new Lee. Even now, up there on the hill, there was an aftermath of something strange, unusual. He pushed aside the word "aftermath." There was something strange, unusual *now*. The very atmosphere of the house suggested it. Out in the garden rustling tree branches had whispered it. And down in the village, in the carpenter's shop, there was the same hint of the unusual. Cuthbert Lee and Bruce, the carpenter, had shared some experience. Dennison felt certain of it. Yet if the secret had its roots in the East, how could Bruce, who had never left his own country, so share it that it had become a vital link between the two men?

The landlady was waiting in the inn parlour. She had lighted a fire, which sent shafts of light like prying fingers about the oak-beamed ceiling and dark corners of the room.

"The night has gone cold. I think a storm is coming up. Would you like hot coffee?"

"Thanks." Dennison drew a chair to the blaze. "Up on the hillside the wind grew very keen."

She brought the coffee and set it on a table at his side. "So you have been up there." She jerked her hand towards the hills. "The views are fine, and one can breathe. Down here it's often stifling."

Dennison spoke of the scenery, of a far-off peep of the sea caught between a cleft of the hills. Outside, the wind was still rising, beating about the windows as if another voice spoke. The firelight threw a reflection of their figures on the wall in monstrous caricature. One of the windows, teased by the wind, rattled suddenly in its socket.

The landlady shivered, drawing her shoulders together. "There's something startling in the tricks of the wind."

"Startling?" Dennison turned to her. "You used that word this afternoon when you spoke of the change in your village carpenter."

She nodded. "It was the right word. From a drunken brute—to *this!*" She moved her hands in a gesture of amazement. "From a man whose body buried his soul to a man who is—what you see him."

"What do we see?" Dennison asked quickly.

"A man who has been stirred to the very depths by some event, a man who regards his own past history with abhorrence, a man who was the worst in the village, and is now the best. Yet with it all something strange—a secret——" She fell silent, staring at the fire.

Presently she glanced up, meeting Dennison's eyes. "And up there on the hillside—didn't you feel there was something unusual, something *wonderful?*" Her voice hung on that last word, emphasising it. The wind, in another flurried passing, seemed to catch the word, to catch it far into the night, shouting it along the valley: "*Wonderful!*"

Dennison pushed his coffee cup aside and bent to the fire. "Tell me about the change in your carpenter. The worst man in the village—he was that?"

She had the knack of using sentences as an artist his brush to paint a picture. She showed the carpenter so held in the grip of his vice that he rarely worked more than three days out of seven—a man, too, with a vein of cruelty in him, so that children and animals instinctively fled at his approach—yet a clever workman, using his tools with skill when his fingers were steady enough to grip them. She showed him a man with unclean lips—a blasphemer. And then Mr. Lee had come to live in the little house on the hillside, and afterwards a change that seemed miraculous in the carpenter, born of some link between the two men. Light after darkness—that was the man's state now.

The landlady's voice ceased abruptly. She turned her head towards the window.

"Hush! What was that?"

"The wind." Dennison had risen to his feet.

"And something else."

The landlady went to the door, opened it, and stood looking out into the night. Dennison followed, peering into the darkness. The moon was hidden now behind storm clouds. The wind beat about them as if to drive them back into the passage. Up on the hillside a light from Lee's house pierced the shadows.

There was the sound of feet on the cobbled

pavement, and the face of the carpenter came into the circle of light flung from the open doorway. He looked at Dennison and Mrs. Hunt.

"There's a storm coming. Can't you feel it?"

A crash of thunder answered. The air seemed suddenly filled with the sound of battle, as of the approach of an invisible army. Flash after flash lit the valley and showed the hills in momentary detail. There was a far-off sound of falling brickwork.

"That seemed to come from the hill." Dennison was out on the pavement now. He could not have defined the impulse that moved his feet. He commenced to run by Bruce's side through the heavily falling rain, making for the path that wound up the hill, treading it presently. It seemed inevitable that they should go. Their pace slackened as the path grew steeper, but they pressed on doggedly, silently. The night wrapped them about in a curtain of darkness and beating rain. Dennison could not have told what interval of time had elapsed when the wind began to fail as quickly as it had arisen. Thunder now was like a volleying of guns in a distant place. There was a gleam of moonlight behind the ragged edges of the clouds.

Dennison felt a hand on his arm.

"There's the light in the sitting-room. It must have been the outhouse that was struck."

The light grew nearer; presently it flung a welcome light across the path. The sound of their footsteps heralded their approach. The door was opened, and Lee's voice called—

"Is that you, Bruce?" He held a light over his head, and its light brought revelation.

"You too, Dennison!"

"We feared the lightning had struck your house."

"Only the outhouse. The house itself wasn't touched."

"I might have known—I might have known!" The carpenter's voice held a subtle suggestion of reproof, almost as if he reproached himself for his temerity. A look of understanding passed from his eyes to Lee's.

"Come in and dry yourselves." Lee stepped back into the passage. "I'll get you some hot coffee."

They passed into the room Dennison had sat in earlier in the evening. Lee threw wood into the fire-grate and lighted it, brought coffee, hung their dripping coats before the blaze to dry. It was all prosaic; the room itself was prosaic, and the three men who sat there. And yet—— Dennison suddenly put his cup down and bent forward in his chair.

"What is it?" He looked from one to the other with questioning eyes. "What makes this house different from any other?"

"You feel it different?" Lee's voice was sharp on the question.

"Absolutely. There's some wonderful secret hidden here." The words came with assurance. He knew it as surely as he knew that he breathed.

Lee was silent for a little space of time. He rose from his seat at last, looking at Dennison.

"Come and see."

They went out into the hall and crossed to the other side of the house. Lee hesitated a moment before a closed door, then threw it wide. The two men stepped inside.

And Dennison felt himself in a place of mystery. He did not notice the details of the room. He felt in the presence of something vast. Everything that had mirrored immensity in his mind—mountains, the sea, the sweep of the sky overhead, the sun and distant stars, they seemed to be dwarfed, to become insignificant. Just here, close to him, was something greater than they. He looked about him then, seeking. He saw bare walls, bare floor, undraped windows, and in the centre of the room just a carpenter's bench.

"It came from the East." Lee's voice deepened. The thrill of it gripped Dennison so that his whole being was held in an intensity of listening. "It is more than twenty centuries old."

"Twenty centuries!"

Lee came closer to Dennison.

"It is just common wood. Centuries ago it should have changed and crumbled into dust. But here Time cast aside laws that seem to us immutable. Time was impotent; he could not work upon *this* wood."

Dennison's voice was low. "Twenty centuries ago—where was it?"

"In a carpenter's shop at Nazareth."

The words thrilled Dennison. He took a step nearer to the carpenter's bench, halted. Awe gripped him. Outside, the elements had hushed. The only sound in the world was surely the sound of wood being fashioned in a carpenter's shop. The sound

rose, passed into the far vault of the sky, reached to the limits of the universe. All other voices were hushed and dwarfed.

Lee spoke at last.

"For long centuries it has lain buried in the desert. The secret was whispered here and there in the East, handed down from father to son, believed or disbelieved. For years I was seeking, seeking. I mixed with wandering tribes, heard the stories that had come down through the centuries—myths, poetical fancies, some would call them. I believed. I spent years in my quest. This one thing only I sought. And when I found it——" The man's expression was exalted, purged of everything save a sense of awe.

The door opened slowly, and Bruce came in. He looked neither to right nor left, but went straight to the carpenter's bench and knelt before it. Dennison recalled the man's voice earlier in the day: "I would rather be a carpenter than a king on his throne." He understood now. Surely it was the most sacred of all callings! The change in Bruce was explained. He had been in the presence of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Lee turned to Dennison. "Some day I shall go out into the world with my treasure. I shall go to men sick of the stress of their daily toil and say: 'Look at this carpenter's bench. Remember weary days of toil spent here.' Or I shall go to people who use the years as toys to play with, pushing them into the presence of the Great Workman. . . . Or to men like Bruce, who had lost their way."

Dennison was caught into the mesh of the other's enthusiasm. In fancy he saw a long procession of men and women coming to the carpenter's bench as to a shrine. A wonderful exhilaration came to him.

These dreams were with him, clamouring against his ear, when he left Lee's house presently and descended the hill. Overhead the sky was swept clear of clouds. Stars crowded there like innumerable lamps, and under this bejewelled sky stood the little house with its Treasure. Dennison halted, looking backwards, then turned again and went down into the valley. Wonderful? The word wove itself in and out his thoughts like a golden strand. Time could not touch with corroding fingers that bench from the little shop at Nazareth. It was above the laws that govern lesser things and seem to us immutable. And, if so, might there not be, in strange corners of the world, many things that had been fashioned by those Hands, common utensils for daily needs, necessities for simple households, fashioned by the Hands that afterwards were pierced?

Down in the valley the village lay hushed and still, with closed doors and shuttered windows. Only a light from the window of the inn parlour greeted him. He opened the door and stepped inside. The landlady heard him and came to the foot of the stairs. She saw his face in the flare of the candle she held, and gave an exclamation of astonishment. Something had changed him. His eyes had the strange exalted look that you saw in the eyes of Bruce, the carpenter. Sometimes she herself had felt a touch of inexplicable awe, as if somewhere near at hand there was a place of wonder.

Dennison fell asleep with his face to the open window that looked out towards the little house on the hillside.

IN THE COUNTRY OF THE PHILISTINES

By GRACE CARLTON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

THEY had decided to lunch at Donemallo's. It was convenient, and they had often dined there before. Their usual waiter greeted them with his usual exuberance, and led the way to the table which they had come to look on as "theirs."

There is a nice homey feeling, as Drusilla observed, in realising that you own a waiter and a table.

But Donemallo—they called him Donemallo out of sheer laziness, although he obviously was not the proprietor—lost some of his exuberance as the meal proceeded. Not from any fault of theirs, for, although engrossed in conversation, their behaviour was irreproachable, but a succession of things occurred to annoy him.

A large party, arriving with a burst of importance, had refused to be separated. Tables had been hastily thrust together and covers hurriedly set. The undecorated mass of spoons, forks, cruets, and other impedimenta offended his artistic sense. That was the first cause of grievance. Secondly, considerably less than half the party was adult. That offended his sense of decorum. Donemallo's prided itself on its freedom from respectability. Pigtails and Eton collars scandalised him as much as a ballet-skirt would have jarred upon a Band of Hope superintendent. Thirdly—and, he fondly imagined, lastly—Papa, Mamma aiding and abetting, had thrust aside the menu and had ordered nothing but fish and *pommes sautés* for all. The significance of their order was lost upon him until he heard the Honourable Bob remark *sotto voce* to his companion—

"I say, Dru, just look at those old geysers mopping up fish and chips!"

Then he knew. Over Donemallo's portals could be inscribed the tragic word "Ichabod."

He could not forbear pouring out his troubles to the couple at the corner table. But his recital of woe was soon interrupted. Papa was calling him in stentorian tones. He went sadly across to the devastated tables.

"Yes, sir?" There was, as it were, a faded eagerness about him, the ghost of his former exuberance.

"Pot o' tea," was the command.

"Sir?"—tremblingly.

"Pot o' tea, and be sharp about it!"

"Now, sir?"

"Now, instanter, *toot sweet*."

Donemallo was an artist. If the name and fame of his house were to disappear, it should at least have a glorious exit. He marshalled a quintet of waiters. In solemn procession they advanced towards the unconscious criminals, each bearing some insignia of the tea equipage. Donemallo himself brought up the rear with a huge earthenware teapot. With pomp and circumstance they set them down before Mamma, flustered at so much attention. Papa was beaming complacently, the numerous offspring reduced to an awestruck silence.

Then Donemallo retired, a broken man, to the corner table for sympathy. The Honourable Bob's comment was not consoling.

"Jove! Fish and chips *and* tea! What's Donemallo's coming to?"

"Ah, what indeed?" murmured Donemallo. "I obeyed my country's call and served loyally. I was wounded, I was even mentioned, and I come back to this!" His gesture could not have been more tragic if it had indicated the smoking ruins of his homestead.

But Papa was too energetic a man to leave time for emotion. He was anxious to set the procession moving again.



"'And don't forget the hot water,' Papa commanded, '*toot sweet*, instanter.'"

"Hot water!" he demanded.

"And we may as well have some more chips," added Mamma.

"Cheeps?" Donemallo professed to be at a loss. The eldest pigtail came to the rescue.

"You mean *pom sowt*, Ma," she said.

"And don't forget the hot water," Papa commanded, "*toot sweet*, instanter." He believed in addressing foreigners in their own language whenever possible.

"If and when you can keep your attention from those unspeakable people for two consecutive minutes . . ." Drusilla was saying icily to her companion.

"Well, aren't they the giddy limit?"

Drusilla, sore because she had already made three attempts at a heart-to-heart talk, agreed coldly that they were indeed "a boundary to the point of vertigo."

Bob became pensive.

"So you see," said Drusilla, "the fix I shall be in when I tell my people." She broke off again. "You're not attending," she said severely.

"I was just thinking . . . boundary . . . bounder . . . limit. I'm sure that would work up into a joke. It's worth thinking over."

"If I'd known you were going to think," Drusilla remarked peevishly, "I wouldn't have bothered to have dinner with you. I've something important and confidential to tell you—most important and most confidential."

"So've I. Your news can't be half as important as mine," said Bob, putting



"'Well, aren't they the giddy limit?'"

aside weightier considerations for the moment.

"Toss you for first innings," Dru suggested.

"That's no good. Whoever's second will only be thinking over what they're going to say. I can give my news in a nutshell."

"So can I," said Dru.

"Right. We'll announce it together. I'll count three. Now, then. Not too loud."

He counted softly. "One, two, *three!*" and simultaneously they breathed—

"I'm engaged."

"The devil you are!" said Bob.

Drusilla laughed. "Now, the victim's name," she said. "One, two, three! . . ."

Either her breath gave out or her response was drowned in Bob's. All that was heard was "Poppy Wootton."

"What!" exclaimed Drusilla.

"You must remember her. A frightfully

pretty girl. Why, it was you introduced us! She was in your corps or something. We met after a daylight raid. She had her brother with her."

"Yes—Jack."

"Of course you would remember the brother!"

"Of course I would," Drusilla answered blandly. "You see, I'm engaged to him."

It was Bob's turn to ejaculate an incredulous "What!"

"He used to come and see Poppy a good deal when we were stationed at Warlock," Dru explained, "and somehow, since the War, I've seen a good deal of him."

"With or without the Poppy excuse. I only ran up against her again by chance recently," he explained in his turn, "but I was awfully taken with her that first time we met, so we didn't take long to come to an understanding."

"Do your people know?" Drusilla asked.

"No. Do yours?"

"Rather not. I've put out one or two feelers. But—what happens to a feeler? Does it get nipped in the bud?"

Bob murmured sympathy.

"Talk about breaking the ice," he said, "an Arctic exploration would be child's play to telling my people I'm going to marry Poppy Wootton."

"We shall have to elope. We'll have a double runaway," Dru suggested. "You and I will be brothers-in-law, shan't we?"

"More or less," he replied. "Funny, isn't it, after . . ."

"After what?" she asked.

It was a sentence better left unfinished. Even a good pal like Dru would resent it if he said "after always intending to marry you." To avoid reply, his attention wandered again to the other table. Donemallo's anguish had given way to rage. He stalked up and down past the offenders in heavy-tragedy style, from time to time hovering over them ominously. He looked capable of offering up the entire family in a holocaust, but would content himself, for the time being, with picking up an inoffensive sauce-bottle or milk-jug and replacing it with unnecessary fervour and emphasis. Papa still beamed. He liked attention. The family was still visibly—and audibly—enjoying their repast.

"I don't know that our people can cut up rough," Bob went on, after a decorous pause. "After all, the Woottons may not be in Debrett, but that's all out-of-date tosh. I shall tell my people so."

"Do you know anything about the family?" Drusilla asked. "Jack says nothing."

"They've a charming place in Surrey. I'm going down there soon for a week-end."

"And then you'll know the worst."

"Anyway, it's Poppy I'm marrying," he maintained stoutly. "That's all I know, except that the younger boys are at Eton."

"Oh, well——" said Dru, encouraged.

"Poppy says——" Bob stopped. This time it was Drusilla's attention which had wandered. Two people had come into the restaurant. The look of radiant expectation which had crossed Dru's face gave way to a stony glare when she saw that the newcomers, unconscious of the presence of herself and Bob, were making their way to the other table. They were greeted vociferously. There was much kissing and a chorus of "Hullo, son! Here you are at last! We'd given you up. We've had our snack," and so on.

It was then that Jack and Poppy Wootton became aware of the presence of their respective *fiancés*, and encountered the petrifying glances of the brothers-in-law to be. All four recovered themselves more or less successfully. Two gallant young people advanced to meet another equally gallant pair, and each tried valiantly to hide their dismay and stupefaction. Explanations ensued, then introductions, more greetings equally vociferous, but mercifully matters had not yet advanced to the kissing stage.

"Now, I'll tell you what," said Mr. Wootton genially, "you come down, both of you, next week-end to our little place in Surrey. What do you say, Ma? Make a week of it."

Ma acquiesced. Bob was engaged in settling his bill with a disillusioned and reproachful Donemallo, and Drusilla, stranded, searched in vain for a pretext. But her consent being taken for granted, she left the question to settle itself. Presently, leaving Jack and Poppy to enjoy the unabated transports of the family reunion, the two walked soberly out of the restaurant.

"After all," said Bob again, but a trifle less stoutly, "it's Poppy I'm marrying."

Drusilla was not to be outdone in loyalty. "Jack is a dear," she remarked warmly.

"I suppose we shall meet at the charming little place in Surrey," Bob said in farewell.

"I suppose so," Drusilla returned mournfully.

"That's tangible, anyway," he consoled her.

"I have heard," replied Drusilla in melancholy tones, "that Walworth is in Surrey."

II.

THE week was proving a great success. Papa Wootton was radiant; Mamma, as usual, acquiescent. The "little place in Surrey" had never seemed so imposing. Mr. Wootton could not tire of showing off its beauties to his prospective son and daughter-in-law.

They both had known it in its less ornate days, before the Montards had been obliged to sell it, lock, stock, and barrel. Since Mr. Wootton had acquired it, he had added many improvements—to use his own phrase, he had "aggrandisised it." The Montard things were old, and had for the most part been thrust into inconspicuous corners. Not that Mr. Wootton despised old things, but he preferred them to have been passed through Christie's recently and to have received the hall-mark of advertisement. And the Montard possessions had just remained where they were, unvalued.

"Yes," said Bob, when Mr. Wootton explained the position to him, "the Montards came over with the Flood and brought most of their kit with them."

The result was a happy combination of antiques, old and new, placed cheek by jowl against the relics of the earlier Wootton *ménage*. Furniture of all periods lived in happy union with some old bamboo which Mrs. Wootton could not bring herself to part with. A Montard painted by Lely was sandwiched between "enlargements" of Papa and Mamma Wootton, works of art which even Mamma could only refrain from acknowledging an eyesore by remembering what a bargain they had been.

"I shall go mad," Dru whispered to Bob, when they had been conducted over the premises for the umptieth time.

But Mr. Wootton had no presentiment of her approaching insanity. He considered "Jack's girl" a very sensible young woman. He also approved of his future son-in-law, whom he invariably called the Honourable Bob. Drusilla had successfully hidden the fact that she also was Honourable. When he discovered it, he addressed her, whether in jest or seriously she could not determine, as "Honourable Miss."

"It's all right in the Japanese garden," she murmured, "but I can't stay in the Japanese garden all the time."

Jack and Poppy had the good sense to keep in the background and to devote themselves to arranging quartettes and *têtes-à-tête*. As far as possible they arranged picnics and rambles in the woods, or whatever other fixtures would take them from the bosom of their family.

The other Woottons acquiesced, considering that such things were fitting and proper when "young folks were courting," but they could not refrain from bursting in upon these picnic parties armed with an extraordinary amount of fresh provender and various thermos flasks which Drusilla unduly suspected of containing the inevitable "fish and chips."

Jack and Poppy would come through the ordeal with considerable credit, and yet. . . . There was always an "and yet" in the minds of their *fiancés*.

On Sunday evening the four were in the Japanese garden arranging their programme, when news was brought to them by the youngest "Eton boy." Since no other evidence was forthcoming, it must be deduced that Poppy had been led to the hasty conclusion that to wear an Eton suit declared the wearer an Etonian. Jack and Poppy left their guests with hasty apologies. An aunt and uncle had driven over, and they must go in and see them, but, murmured Poppy, that Bob and Dru had better "get used to them" another time. The phrase sounded ominous.

Left to themselves, the two talked guardedly on commonplace topics.

"Town to-morrow." Bob's tone had just the right touch of resignation.

"Yes." Dru was equally punctilious.

A long silence.

"I think," said Dru, "Mr. Wootton is quite a good sort, and Mrs. Wootton's a dear."

Bob agreed. Their eyes met and then instinctively avoided looking at each other. The same thought had crossed the mind of each. An unexpected discovery. The elder Woottons were, in some inexplicable way, preferable to the younger. There was nothing to jar on them in Jack and Poppy. They were nice—just nice, appallingly nice, and yet . . .

"I think I shall emigrate," said Bob moodily.

"I'd thought of that," returned Dru. "But they have relations in every colony."

There was another guilty silence, this time broken by the sounds of people approaching—the aunt, the uncle, Mr. Wootton, Mrs. Wootton, the entire Wootton family. They all came bearing down upon them. Poppy, walking beside her aunt, was talking rapidly. How like that aunt she would be in a few years' time! Jack, between his father and uncle, looked, as his father would have said, "the very spit and image of both." Which was the blood-relation, neither Dru nor Bob knew nor cared. They all looked alike. They saw only countless Woottons, more Woottons than they thought could possibly exist, the whole world Woottonised, and themselves caught in a finely-meshed web of Woottons.

"Dru," whispered Bob, "couldn't we cut off to the station? There must be a train to Town some old time."

WITH A SCARAB.

MORE than a carven gem,
Or delicate cameo,
Or vase's graven stem,
Thou canst re-fan the glow
Of ancient, ashen days,
Dead pomps and secret things,
Magnificence of kings,
And spoils of Asian frays.

But more than these thou hast known,
Scarab, yea, more than these:
The Sphinxian riddle, blown
Through desert shawms; the peace
Of Shu; the might of Phthah;
The tablets of grave Thoth;
Isis, and astral troth;
And the inner soul-flame, Ra.

Pharaohs have reigned and died;
There are no Pharaohs more!
But thou in perfect pride
Art as thou wert of yore.
The pomps and pæans depart,
The beautiful things, they rest;
And what thou emblemest,
That, of thyself, thou art.

Yea, Immortality
Is thine as it is thou!
And lo! I am sending thee
As such a symbol now;
Go, without more ado,
Immaculate messenger,
And say my love for her
Is an immortal, too.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.

MRS. VANE'S STUDY

By B. A. CLARKE

Author of "Minnows and Tritons," "Both Sides of the Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

PERHAPS nowhere in Greater London is the printed word held in deeper reverence than at Malvern, the abode of the Vanes, and, until yesterday, nowhere would you find more printed words to honour. Mrs. Vane had three grown-up daughters and four sons, all inveterate magazine and review buyers, and none of them daring to destroy a page. Nothing was destroyed—*nothing*. Even scraps of newspaper that blew in through the opened front door were sacred. Dishevelled printed sheets bowling down West Lawton hill before an equinoctial gale made for Malvern as a city of refuge. If the street door was shut, they would cling around the lamp-post opposite until one of the family emerged, when they would make a dash for the passage and safety. On being noticed, they would be taken up to the study, on whose floor floated the accumulations of thirty years. The amount was incredible. Mr. Vane had been in the advertising business, and each month at least a score of magazines came to him gratuitously, or he thought so. In the long run he paid a fearful price for them. He died five years before this story opens, but his children still recall the cries of anguish that came from the study when their father beheld the results of one of his wife's periodic clearances. She could call them clearances.

"My dear, what have you been piling on my desk?"

Mrs. Vane, meek under shouted complaints, took the upper hand when her husband descended to the dining-room to amplify them. She would enumerate the hours she had unselfishly devoted to clearing his room, assisted by Mrs. Summerdaye, the charwoman, who had really worked indefatigably

"Wonderful, my dear, wonderful! I can't think how you do it." If he had dared, he would have added "or why."

Let me describe a typical tidying, or, rather, its opening day. Mrs. Summerdaye, having breakfasted as became one taking her last civilised meal, would appear on the first floor, wiping her fingers on her apron. Mrs. Vane, with her splendid brown hair protected by a bath towel turban, would unlock the study door, revealing an appalling prospect. Magazines, papers, and periodicals covered the floor to a minimum depth of eighteen inches, but against the shelving which covered an entire wall the accumulations were twice as high, and seemed a tidal wave threatening to engulf them.

Look back an hour later, and you will find the tidal wave half across the room, and the women, who have apparently dived through it, standing drenched in what you may take for spindrift, but is dust arising from the shelved books that, *seriatim*, are being opened until their backs crack and shut noisily. If you argue that nothing is gained by this, that matter, being indestructible, the dust immediately settles again, I reply that women always have dusted books thus, and that woman's intuition is very wonderful. Further, the argument overlooks the dust they swallowed, which, in the case of Mrs. Summerdaye, who worked with her mouth open, must have been very considerable.

But if the dust offends you, return in two hours, when it will have gone (or resettled, whichever you like). The tidal wave has passed on. Both women are apparently resting, but Mrs. Vane's rest is that of a top at its maximum speed. She is seated on the writing desk in the window,

and by her side are a dozen magazines that she has retrieved from the floor. These cannot be sold or given away until she has satisfied herself that they contain nothing that any member of the family might find useful. As the family's studies, interests, and hobbies comprise every subject under the sun, the conclusion is invariable—the magazine in question must be kept until Fred, Bertha, Tom, etc., have pronounced upon it. As Mrs. Vane investigates, she slips into each journal a half-sheet of notepaper whereon she has written the name of the son or daughter to whom reference must be made. Being an intelligent woman, there are many pages absorbingly interesting to herself. Mrs. Summerdaye, sitting on the floor with her head against the bookshelves, and her elastic-sided boots stuck out straight before her, is deep in one of her favourite Daffodil novelettes, which she always has with her. Unconscious that a million *Windsor* readers are spying upon her, she is wiping her streaming eyes on her cuff, overcome by the fate threatening beautiful wronged Millicent.

"No, Lord Frederick, sooner than a marriage without love, I would support myself by work."

But for the presence of her employer, Mrs. Summerdaye, who, in addition to her charing, has the care of a large family and an ailing husband, would howl aloud.

Return at one o'clock, and you will find Mrs. Vane picnicking with the charwoman on the floor. A loaf is between them and a Dutch cheese. Beside Mrs. Vane is a bottle of ginger ale. Mrs. Summerdaye cannot work without stout—without it, cannot even sit and watch her employer work. After lunch quicker progress is made. By five much of the floor space is cleared, and the desk is piled with clumps of magazines, each clump a complete year. The good work will be continued the first day Mrs. Summerdaye can come again, but for the moment nothing remains except to tie up the years. Oh, why is there not some good angel at Mrs. Vane's side now to tell her to send out for a ball of string? What an infinitude of future toil would be saved her! Instead, she ransacks dresser and sideboard drawers, denudes the house of every piece of loose string, with the result that henceforward, whenever any member of the family has a parcel to tie up, recourse will be made to the magazine bundles, and chaos will be brought back again. But for the moment all is well. Magazine bundles, looking like fretful porcupines with their reference slips, are tied up and labelled, and Mrs. Vane, thoroughly exhausted, removes her towel turban, brushes out her hair, and awaits the sympathy and congratulations of her husband, which will take the form we have indicated.

II.

After Mr. Vane's death these wholesale periodic tyings-up of magazines (which were followed, of course, by retail untyings) were undertaken with a single eye to these treasures themselves and not to making the room habitable. The desk was never cleared, and the ancient path which Mr. Vane had maintained from the doorway to it, became obliterated. The children did not question this abandonment of a room. Their father had had a clear right to a study, and it did not strike them that it should be used now to mitigate the bedroom overcrowding. The word "study" blinded them, and when at last there arose a rebellion against its being kept as a dump, this took the form of a demand for a practicable writing-room.

Fred had turned author. His first short story was snapped up by the very first editor that saw it, and brought fifteen guineas, which Fred thought adequate, and his brothers excessive. And the editor (Heaven help the man!) wanted more at the same ruinous price. But no cudgellings of Fred's brains could start another plot. Directly after tea he would seat himself before a ream of lined foolscap, but when disturbed by supper he had achieved nothing but girls' profiles or his own name scribbled again and again.

"Andrew objects to my having the gas alight all the evening in our bedroom," he exclaimed to his mother, who was begging him to get some more fifteen-guinea cheques before the editor recovered his sanity, "and how can you expect me to write anything that the world will not willingly let die down here?"

Unquestionably he had grounds for complaint. Two puppies were playing Rugby, with an old cloth cap for ball, under the breakfast-room table, which had been pushed against the wall to make room for Tom and Andrew's boxing.

"If you would clear the study for me, I could write."

"'Horatius, said the Consul, as thou sayest, so let it be,'" said his mother. "John, you won't mind running round to



"There are many pages absorbingly interesting."

Mrs. Summerdaye and engaging her for to-morrow, or, failing that, for any day except Saturday. I'll referee the boxing in your absence."

"Righto," said that giant baby cheerfully. He stood six feet two, and it was not certain that he had stopped growing.

The following morning Mrs. Vane and her now ageing henchwoman attacked the study. The formal opening, however, did not take place until nearly a week later, the door being kept locked against the family in the meantime, as, indeed, it had been for a long time before. When inducted to his new sanctum, Fred found that the litter on the floor was deeper than ever, but

against the wall, just inside the door, a space had been cleared large enough to accommodate a tiny three-legged table and a kitchen chair. On the large desk in the window accretions were climbing ceiling-wards.

Fred expressed a great deal more gratitude than he felt, and, being in honour bound to take advantage of his solitude, he wrote a splendid introduction to a story whose tragic end demanded a portentous start. Unfortunately he hadn't the story.

At supper inquiries were made as to his progress, and when he reported favourably, Mrs. Vane said—

"My dears, what did I tell you? Fred is going to do us all proud." (Humorously she pronounced it "prāōd.") "My solution, clearing the study for him, solves the whole difficulty."

She spoke as though the idea of using a study for writing, or, indeed, for anything, was an inspiration the like of which came to no one but herself.

On the next evening (Saturday) Fred wrote freely but farcically, thereby making his opening useless. Again his brethren congratulated him, and his mother threw herself bouquets.

At the dinner-table on Sunday, when Mrs. Vane was enumerating Fred's reasons for thankfulness, and the hours of servile toil that had gone to this smoothing of his road to fame, he suggested that the good work was not completed, that further developments lay ahead.

"Of what nature?" his mother asked contentiously.

"There is such a tiny space cleared. I have to write with my face so close up to the wall that, after an hour or two, my nose feels blunted. Ultimately I should become as flat-faced as the Esquimaux."

"Perhaps you see other deficiencies?"

"Well, I suppose you contemplate an eventual clearing of father's desk, and of the floor to make it accessible."

"The Rural Field Paths Association could compel you to restore the old path from door to window," said Andrew. "I am sure it was in use long enough to establish a right of way."

"The desk being in the window," said Mrs. Vane, "cannot be used in the summer on account of the glare. That is why your father often wrote in the garden."

Tom began to laugh. All the Vanes laugh at their own jokes, but Tom secures payment of self-applause in advance.

"It seems that the study as it stands has not only been adapted perfectly to Fred's present needs, but that wise provision has been made against climatic changes in the distant future."

When the author went upstairs, he found his papers on the landing. The study door was locked: he had been evicted. While he was collecting his sheets, his mother emerged from her bedroom.

"You must find somewhere else to write," she said freezingly. "I can't be responsible for your profile."

The blood rushed to Fred's face. "I don't recognise your right to keep us from the study. You have a bedroom to yourself, which no one else has, except Bertha, and hers is really only a dressing-room. In this house there is so little accommodation for us all that no one has a right to keep a room out of use."

"And whose house is this, may I ask?" said Mrs. Vane grandly.

"That is a question I should not care to answer without consulting a lawyer."

To Fred's amazement, his mother rushed into her bedroom and locked the door. She did not come down to tea.

"What is the matter with mother?" asked Bertha.

Fred told her.

"Oh, Fred, what a pity you said that—to-day of all days! Didn't you know that a letter came this morning from the Bird-in-the-Hand Building Society calling in their third mortgage?"

Fred whistled. "I suppose it is only a question of higher interest?"

"No," replied Bertha gloomily, "they don't think the security is good. You know it was a personal favour to Dad that the chairman of the Bird-in-the-Hand took up a third mortgage. That makes it useless looking elsewhere. The amount is only two hundred pounds. Mother thought we could raise it amongst ourselves. We can, Fred, can't we?"

"Just."

"Bye-bye, bicycle," said John. "I must use Tom's."

"Don't be so self-denying about it," said Tom.

"I see a summer holiday gardening," said Andrew.

"Do you mind so very much about the violin, Molly?" asked Bertha.

"Not a bit," lied Molly stoutly. "It is you people who suffer from the squeaking of my old one; I rather like it."

"Perhaps the kid's money can be left. My fifty-five pounds can rank first," said Fred.

"If mother will let you contribute anything, Fred, after the way you rubbed it in about having advanced so much money for house repairs."

"I didn't," said Fred. "The phrase 'consulting a lawyer' proves that I had in mind legal indebtedness only."

"I am quite sure mother took it as a claim that your equity in the house was greater than her own. I have often thought we ought to make a stand against her assumption that she is the whole family, but I do wish it hadn't taken the form of proving that she doesn't really own the house."

"That is our only weapon against her," said Andrew.

"Well, I wish it hadn't been used. All said and done, we were getting on very well. Mother was so proud of being a houseowner: why couldn't Fred have let her continue so?"

Bertha's forecast was justified. Mrs. Vane approached all the members of the family except her eldest son, and when he volunteered his savings she repulsed him. The entire savings of the others, apart from interest, totalled one hundred and fifty-two pounds. None of her children had any idea how she proposed to raise the balance, until the twins surprised her valuing the silver, and, appalled at the obvious inference, rushed to tell Bertha, who refused to be horrified.

"Best thing she could possibly do. Ma is dying to make up her quarrel with Fred, but she simply can't when the first step is the acceptance of his money. I couldn't myself. Imagine the position. 'My dear, let us be friends again, and I'll take every penny you possess!'"

"But what are we to do?"

"Use the kitchen forks for a week. Directly, with the aid of the pawnbroker, this two hundred pounds is paid off, mother will fall on Fred's neck, and then, if he insists on redeeming the pledges, he may."

"But that is the same thing, Bertha, as letting him contribute," said Molly.

"It is a totally different thing, because, the mortgage difficulty being settled, Fred's offer is a consequence of the reconciliation and not an integral part of it."

"Cave!" whispered Beryl. "She is on the stairs!"

Mrs. Vane burst on them in one of her mock heroical moods, which had been in abeyance since the quarrel.

"'I had an uncle once——'" She struck a reciter's attitude, held it a few seconds, and then burst out laughing.

"Dear mother," said Bertha, "what is it?"

"'Only this and nothing more.' I am about to visit the husband of my female aunt, but before doing so will sell off the contents of the study, lock, stock and barrel—newspapers, which never commanded so high a price as to-day, magazines and sheep-bound books. Some of them are uncut, and this proof of entire unreadability always stamps books as works of real literature."

"The bound books may fetch something, but you are not telling us the whole truth about newspapers and magazines."

"What do you mean, Bertha?"

"Selling them has no connection with this mortgage repayment. You wish to have the study swept and garnished, to be handed over as a kiss-and-make-it-up present to Fred. You can't fool me, young woman; I have seen you before."

Mrs. Vane blushed like a school-girl. "Well, for the present let it be a secret between us girls. Don't say a word about it to the men."

At supper the breach between Mrs. Vane and her eldest son seemed deeper than ever.

Mrs. Vane and the charwoman got to work early the following morning. Their progress was astonishing now that Mrs. Vane did not read the magazines before bundling them. The task was finished at half-past four.

"You had better go down to the kitchen, Mrs. Summerdaye, and get your tea," said her employer.

"Thank you, mum, but I feel as if I couldn't set down to a table one of your study days. If I could have a pot of tea and a loaf and butter up here——"

It was a fine touch of Mrs. Vane to join her.

"It is the last time you and me, Mrs. Vane, will ever hobnob together in this room. You was a fine young woman the first time you set down on this floor opposite me."

Mrs. Vane winced at the tense. She held her own so admirably that it shocked her to be told that the years had stolen anything from her, even youth.

"We have grown old together, you and me, mum, amongst these papers," continued the charwoman, who, feeling that she had

struck a rich vein of sentiment, was determined to exploit it fully.

"We have seen everything go that gilds life's morning—bright eyes, youthful 'opes, and endearing young charms, and now we've grown old and ugly, and nobody cares, as the hymn says."

Mrs. Summerdaye sat with a loaf between her knees, and the table knife, with which she was buttering it, arrested in mid-air, dreaming of her lost charms, which had taken to themselves wings long before Mrs. Vane remembered her.

"I don't consider myself old and ugly, I can assure you," said Mrs. Vane, laughing; but her merriment was somewhat forced.

After eating and drinking copiously, Mrs. Summerdaye broke out again. "Everything we have loved and treasured has been taken from us, and now these magazines, which I thought would see us both out, are going. Well, it is best so. I couldn't have borne seeing anyone else, not even Miss Bertha, taking your place tidying them."

Mrs. Summerdaye being a good twelve years the senior, and much older for her age, the assumption that she must necessarily survive her employer was a capital joke. Mrs. Vane recognised it as such, but had no inclination to laugh. It was vastly amusing, but she was not amused.

"What has Mrs. Summerdaye been saying to depress my mamma?" asked Bertha, when the charwoman left.

"Nothing—nothing at all. She was *so* funny about the flight of time. Remind me to tell you on some other occasion. You will *scream*."

And then Mrs. Vane began to sing like a street vocalist—

> "Darling, I am getting old,
> Silver threads among the gold.
> Something, something, something grey—
> Life is passing fast away."

"Don't, mother, don't!"

"Why not?"

"Because it hurts," said the younger woman. And then she sat on her mother's lap and began arranging her hair.

"On these tidying days you should let me lady's-maid you."

As she patted the brown tresses into place, she noticed that there were white hairs amongst them—not many, a first autumnal hoar frost, but it told that winter was coming.

"There is just this about it, mumsie. The only people who resent getting old are the people who are not getting old. What are you throwing into the wastepaper basket?"

"Only a circular I found on your father's desk. It is dated the day before he had the stroke, and was, perhaps, the last letter he opened in this house. I thought of keeping it, but it comes from the Imperial Provident, and I don't wish to be reminded of what we sank in that miserable annuity."

This annuity was a sore point at Malvern. At the age of twenty-four Mr. Vane had taken out a policy securing him an income of sixty-eight pounds a year at the age of sixty. Hard pressed as he had been from the day of his marriage, the annual payment of ten pounds had been missed only once—the year the twins were born. That this could occur without the policy lapsing was due to a clause in the agreement, "*or should the payments not have been kept up, the Company undertakes to pay the assured, on reaching the age of sixty, an annuity equal to 9½ per cent. of the premiums actually paid plus 4 per cent. compound interest.*" There were thus no lapsings of policies nor applications for premiums. If you missed twenty years, no one bothered. You would get a proportionately less annuity when the time came, and that was all there was to it. The only way you could lose was by dying early, as poor Mr. Vane had six years before he would have begun to gather the fruit of a lifetime's painful thrift. Naturally Mrs. Vane felt bitter at the hundreds of pounds that thus had been thrown away.

Bertha retrieved the circular. "Nevertheless, mother, Fred will like to examine it. You know how greatly actuarial calculations interest him."

Fred's reception of the document was surprising. "Bertha, shut the door. Don't go until I have read it."

With her hands in her lap, she sat awaiting his pleasure. "Well," she asked, when he looked up, "is there anything that concerns us?"

"I hope so. You helped to lift father out of the cab when he was brought home after the stroke. He struggled to tell you something. What was it?"

"'I am B. Tell mother I am B.' It was his last coherent utterance, but quite meaningless. Why do you ask? We threshed it out at the time."

"Because it is no longer unintelligible; this circular explains it."

"Fred, what is it?"

"The Imperial Provident offer a more attractive annuity policy whereunder, in the

event of death before the annuity begins, the entire payments with interest are refunded to the estate. This they call Annuity Scheme B. Holders of the older policies are given the option of transferring to the B scheme."

"It is no good, Fred. To improve the conditions so materially there must be a charge, and can you imagine poor Daddy ever in a position to pay a considerable sum of money at a day's notice and without mother knowing it? Moreover, the circular arrived the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth of the month, when probably there wasn't a pound in the exchequer. I am sorry to dash your hopes."

"You don't. By the terms of the circular no cash payment was necessary. You could have the charge deducted from the accumulated payments standing to your credit."

"Only one more objection, Fred, dear. What motive had Dad for doing this secretly?"

"Mother was away from home. Besides, he was reducing his annuity to create an insurance whereby she would benefit, and thus would prefer to do it off his own bat. Now is little Miss Smarty satisfied?"

"Oh, Fred, there is really a chance!"

"Chance! It is very nearly a certainty. For the present, however, mum's the word."

"What a good sister Bertha is!" said Mrs. Vane the following evening. "She runs to meet Fred as if he were her lover."

Fred didn't have to tell Bertha. "How much is it?" she gasped.

"Nearer five hundred pounds than four."

"Did the Company raise objections?"

"None whatever: father had completed all formalities, and stands in the books as under Scheme B, of course meeting the cost in the way suggested, by reducing the total payments standing to his credit. Probably it was the last act of his business life. Mother has only to supply proofs of death and succession."

"When are you going to tell her?"

"Bertha, you must break the good news. Mother would hate it to come through me."

Bertha threw up her hands. There was no arguing with such blindness, but she took steps to counteract the effects of it.

Supper was nearing its close when Bertha rose to her feet and rapped for silence with the handle of her knife.

"Mother, please! I wish to make a speech. Ladies and gentlemen," she began, when silence had been obtained. "No, I can't address you as ladies and gentlemen; I know you too well."

"Good old Bertha!" said John, in the lower of his two speaking voices. "I wonder where she pinched that?"

"In the words of the Bard," she continued—

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer.
> And all the clouds that low'r'd upon our house
> In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

For particulars, see small handbills. Further information may be obtained from Mr. Frederick Lee Vane, Malvern, West Lawton."

Fred rose, visibly nervous. He addressed himself solely to the chief.

"My dear mother——"

She extended a large white hand, and he held it while making his statement. When he concluded, Mrs. Vane for once was not equal to the occasion. In silence her sons and daughters sat waiting.

"I have very, very good sons," she said at last, "but they ought to know their old mother better than to take her tantrums seriously."

She pressed Fred's hand and hurried from the room.

This windfall, the first piece of financial good fortune that had ever come her way, was for the moment obscured by what she valued more—the restoration of domestic harmony.

"Leave mother alone for half an hour," said Bertha.

"Before we disperse," said Andrew, rising, "I have a toast to propose: Long life to the of late threatened bank balances."

"'I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,'" sang Molly, and you must hear her light soprano running through all the mazes of Mendelssohn's air above the conversation that follows. The printed page can never convey the family intercourse of the Vanes—so much went on simultaneously.

"We must see that something is blown on the wild time," said Tom.

"Trust mother," said Bertha.

"I vote for a dinner in Town and booked seats at the Opera," said Beryl. "I have always wished to go for once to a theatre with tickets."

"Of course we must have a night out," said Fred, "but what appeals to me is mother's having a real bank account."

Even their father had never had that; there had never been any margin.

"I can see mother paying the tradesmen's bills with cheques," said John.

"There won't be any tradesmen's bills," said Bertha firmly.

This was hard to realise.

Presently Bertha suggested that they should go in search of their mother.

"And don't let anyone be tactful. You know how mother hates it."

They found her on the first-floor landing. She wore her musquash toque (which she believed was generally mistaken for sable), and upon a pillow bore the key of the study.

"William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, presenting the key of the City to Richard II.," she announced.

She dropped on her knees before Fred. When he opened the door, it was seen that the study had become the most presentable room in the house. Upon the desk in the window, clear otherwise, were Fred's papers.

"The papers and magazines, which went for a mere song, were removed this afternoon. Fifteen pounds was offered for the bound books, but I didn't like to accept it without consulting you. Now, of course, there is no object in selling them."

"Good business," said Fred. "I am glad we haven't lost the books."

"I hope, dear Fred, you will write many, many stories in this room," said his mother, kissing him.

"No excuse now if I don't," he replied.

"Let us see you make a start," said Andrew.

Fred seated himself in the revolving chair, sorted his sheets, unscrewed his fountain pen, and began. At least he could write an opening in key with the farcical five hundred words that followed the old tragic introduction. But he was no nearer finding his story.

They gazed upon him reverently. Mrs. Vane beckoned them away. On tiptoe, in order not to break his inspiration, they adjourned to the drawing-room, where they celebrated their good fortune by playing children's party games so rowdily that the noise of it, even in the study, made the breakfast-room with its dog fights seem cloistered calm in comparison. These were followed by tumultuous glee singing, and this by Molly's squeaky fiddle, heard, perhaps, for the last time. Fred was absorbed in his work when the study door opened.

"Come down, Fred. Mother is acting up," said Beryl, using a childish phrase that was still current at Malvern. Entering the drawing-room, he found his mother seated on the floor, apparently cutting up bread-and-butter. She pointed a knife at him. "Pained surprise of a professional author at being asked to countenance the efforts of an amateur."

"Sit down, Fred," exclaimed Tom impatiently. "You are keeping us all waiting."

Fred subsided on the Chesterfield, drawing Beryl down beside him.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Vane from the floor, "I wish to present to you a dramatic monologue entitled 'The Charwoman's Lament.'" She gave it with immense zest.

CONFUSION

By M. Y. DENNISS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

THE carriage rolled swiftly along the dusty country roads, and although it was a perfectly glorious summer's day, it was closed, and the windows had only been let down sufficiently to keep the occupants from absolute suffocation.

Sir Henry Brockley, the elder of the two occupants, was taking up the greater part both of the seat and of the conversation. He was past middle age, moderately tall, a little more than moderately large, his whole person indicative of a kind, jovial, easy-going nature. He was now evidently at pains to keep the conversation from flagging, changing from one subject to another with surprising rapidity, remarking over and over again on the beauty of the day or scenery, addressing numerous questions to his companion, and allowing him very little time to answer.

The other was much taller, much younger, far from handsome, but with a certain charm of expression which usually won for him the distinction of being called good-looking. He only put in a word here and there, when a direct question from Sir Henry made it absolutely necessary. He was absorbed in his own thoughts, seemingly of a rather perplexing nature, for a slight frown contracted his brows, while a puzzled smile lurked in his eyes and hovered round the corners of his mouth.

And, in truth, there was sufficient reason for his perplexity. Half an hour ago he had stepped out of a train on to the platform at Stenhurst, to the best of his belief a stranger to every soul in the place, and yet here he was driving to an unknown destination in the company of Sir Henry Brockley, whom he had never seen or heard of before. It is true that he had not gone willingly—Sir Henry and the footman had pushed him into the carriage when he least expected it, and they had driven off before he had time to realise what had happened. Also his companion had addressed him as "Geoffrey," and his own name was "Guy." He had told this to Sir Henry, had tried to persuade him that he was mistaking him for someone else, but it seemed to make no difference. Sir Henry had promptly accepted the correction and called him "Guy," but had insisted on his accompanying him, telling him that he was expected. His protestations and attempted explanations had been of no avail. Sir Henry had taken his arm and, talking, had led him to the carriage. He had submitted without difficulty, partly amused, partly curious, but when he had been unceremoniously hustled into the carriage, amusement had for a moment given place to annoyance, which had, however, quickly subsided, his curiosity soon gaining the upper hand again. There was some extraordinary mistake, and he was anxious to follow the adventure to its end. Of course there was the possibility, though a faint one, that he was in the clutches of a madman, but he soon gave up that idea, for, if that were so, then the coachman and footman must be mad also.

"Is your uncle quite well, Geof—er—Guy?"

The abrupt question startled Guy Manningford out of his abstraction.

"My uncle? Oh, yes, thanks, but—you must excuse me, sir, I am absolutely at a loss—do you know him?"

"My dear boy, we're cousins, went to school together, and all that sort of thing."

"I never heard that my uncle had any cousins," muttered Guy incredulously.

Sir Henry took no heed of the interruption, and continued: "Unfortunately, we do not see much of each other now. I never go to London, and that's how I never saw you since you were a baby a few months old. And you howled all the time, you young villain." Sir Henry laughed, and Guy Manningford laughed with him. "We are all very pleased to make your acquaintance," pursued Sir Henry, "and when your uncle wrote to say you were coming. . . ."

"You are making a mistake, sir. My uncle never wrote to tell you I was coming; I am quite positive of that. He knew I had

made plans for my holidays, and in any case he would have told me if he had accepted an invitation for me from a friend of his."

"Yes, of course, you are quite right," answered Sir Henry, somewhat flurried. "I—I forgot for the moment . . . I think I hear an aeroplane: can you see it?" With exaggerated eagerness, Sir Henry turned and looked out of the window

"It's only a motor-bicycle," replied Guy calmly. "Do you know my uncle's name?" He smiled as he asked the question—it seemed somehow such a ridiculous thing to ask.

"Didn't I tell you we were cousins?"

"Yes, but what was your cousin's name?"

"Why, Arthur Henderson, of course."

"But my uncle's name is not Arthur Henderson," began Guy triumphantly; "it's——"

"Dear me, dear me! I seem to have got names muddled up somehow to-day. Look, you see that white gate down there? Well, we turn round here and go down past it, then round the corner again, and we're home."

Guy was silent for the rest of the drive; it was useless to argue with Sir Henry, he found.

Ten minutes later he was being led into a large drawing-room, with French windows open to the garden.

Two ladies rose and came towards them.

"Here we are, Mary—not a bit late, I think. Let me introduce you to your cousins, my boy. My wife, Lady Brockley, and my daughter Evelyn."

Was it imagination, or was there something peculiar in the way they greeted him? Guy Manningford asked himself the question as he shook hands with them. Lady Brockley seemed to smile pityingly on him, and surely there was a strange, searching look in Evelyn's deep blue eyes as she raised them to his. Lady Brockley led him to a chair and sat down next to him.

"Evelyn, ring for the tea, will you, dear? I'm sure you must want a cup of tea, after your long journey, Geoffrey."

"This is Guy, you know," put in Sir Henry quickly. "Guy—Manning, I think you said?"

"Manningford. I'm awfully sorry, Lady Brockley. I—I'm afraid you'll think I'm imposing upon you. The fact is, there is some mistake—my fault, I'm afraid, for not making myself clear. Sir Henry thought I was his cousin, and—and he drove me up here; but—you see, I happen to be someone else." He was finding it much more difficult than he had expected to explain things. It was something in Lady Brockley's attitude which put him off; she looked at him in such a peculiar way, and did not seem at all surprised at what he said.

"That does not matter at all," she answered, with a friendly smile. "We were expecting Geoffrey Morton, but, as you have come instead, we are only too pleased to welcome you, and hope you'll have a good time with us."

"I'm afraid you don't understand, Lady Brockley. I'm no relation of yours; I don't even know your cousin. I'm a perfect stranger, and only came here by mistake."

"Yes, yes, we know. But it does not matter. Do you take milk? Evelyn, pass those tea-cakes. You'll have one, won't you—Guy?"

"Don't trouble, Miss Brockley, I'll get one."

Guy Manningford sprang up and crossed to the small table by which Evelyn Brockley was sitting. She handed him the plate across the table. "Do take one; they're very nice."

"Thanks." He took one slowly, looking straight down into her eyes. "Miss Brockley," he said softly, "tell me seriously, who do you think I am?"

She shrank a little under his steady gaze, seemed confused for a moment, then, looking up at him, she answered with a smile: "Guy Manningford, of course."

"Have you ever seen me before?"

"No."

"Have you ever heard of me before?"

"Of Guy Manningford? No, never."

"Have your parents?"

"N-no, I don't think so."

"Then you admit that I'm a stranger to you all?"

"Yes, I suppose so," she laughed lightly, and added quickly: "But do eat your tea-cake; it will get quite cold."

"Never mind that; but tell me, why are you all so anxious for me to stay here?"

"Well, because—because—well, it's nice to have one's friends sometimes, isn't it?"

"Perhaps; but you've just admitted that I'm a stranger. As a matter of fact, you don't believe that at all. You still think I'm your cousin—you all do—and why you——"

"Why don't you sit down, Guy? We don't charge extra." Sir Henry pointed to a chair. He and Lady Brockley had been

so busily engaged talking together that they had heard nothing of what had passed between Evelyn and their guest.

"I'm afraid I must be going, Sir Henry; it's——"

"Nonsense! Where do you want to go to? You're staying here."

"I really don't understand this in the least. Is it a practical joke, or—or what is the matter?" He looked round almost appealingly. Lady Brockley was pouring water into the teapot, and did not even look up; Evelyn's whole attention seemed engaged in removing a few crumbs off her lap. Only Sir Henry answered him.

"Nothing's the matter, my boy. Don't you bother. You've no objection to staying with us, have you?"

"None, but——"

"Well, then, there's no reason in the world why you should go. You've come to stay with us."

"Excuse me, Sir Henry, I did *not* come to stay with you. I came to spend my holidays at Stenhurst, and I meant to stay at the hotel."

"You haven't engaged a room, have you?"

"No. I was told it was not necessary—that I was sure to get one."

"Don't try," said Lady Brockley; "stay with us. You will find it more comfortable than if you stayed at an hotel. Besides, it would be very dull for you, all alone."

"A friend of mine was to have joined me, but unfortunately I had a telegram from him this morning saying he couldn't come. He——"

"Well, that settles it," exclaimed Sir Henry, interrupting. "If you've nowhere in particular to go to, no one who is expecting you, stay here. You will at least have someone to talk to, and you can play tennis with Evelyn."

"The new court is just finished," added Evelyn. "I haven't played on it yet, so we can try it together to-morrow."

"Have some more tea?" Lady Brockley put her hand out for his cup, and Manningford passed it to her mechanically. He had not spoken a word since Sir Henry had interrupted him; he was thinking. Suddenly he came to some decision. His face relaxed into a smile, and he looked up. His eyes, alight with the spirit of adventure, seemed to hold a challenge.

He leant forward, his elbows on his knees, his hands clasped lightly in front of him.

"You really want me to stay with you?" he asked.

"Why, of course. We're only too pleased to have you, my boy."

"Even though I'm not your cousin? I tell you honestly I've never heard of you before, I don't know in the least who you are. I am Captain Guy Manningford, of the —— Light Infantry, on leave for three weeks. As far as I know, I have no other relations in the world but an uncle and some distant cousins in Yorkshire. And I am quite certain that I am not your Cousin Geoffrey. Do you still wish me to stay with you?"

"Certainly, my boy, certainly. All that makes no difference whatever. We ask *you* to stay with us."

"Then I will," exclaimed Manningford, with a light laugh of sheer enjoyment.

II.

GUY MANNINGFORD threw away his cigarette and flung himself down into one of the low wicker chairs which stood invitingly in the shade of a large elm.

He stretched his legs out in front of him, and reached down for the newspaper which someone had left lying on the grass. He glanced idly over the first page, and all of a sudden sat up with a start.

"Good Heavens," he exclaimed, "it's the twenty-second!"

His leave was up the next day, and he found himself suddenly confronted with the necessity of finding a means of escape. The time had gone more quickly than he had realised; he had thought that barely a fortnight had passed, and now he found he had been at Stenhurst almost three weeks. He must go, but for the moment he did not know how that was to be managed. When he had consented to stay at Brockley Manor, he had imagined in a vague manner that, when the time came, he could easily go back to London. He knew now that there were difficulties in the way. He was virtually a prisoner, and if he simply walked out by the gate he would be, if not actually stopped, at least followed and watched, and it would be impossible for him to get to the station. It was imperative that he should be back the next day, but what could he do? He racked his brain to find a possible way of escape.

"What a fool I was!" he apostrophised himself, passing his fingers through his hair in a vain endeavour to clear his brain. "Confound it all, why ever did I

stay here ? How in the world am I going to get away now ? Even if I do get out of here, it would be of no use going to the station—I know I shouldn't be allowed to get into a train. I should have to go over to Horsley. I could do it by crossing the fields—they are usually deserted—and there's a gate at the end of the garden . . ."

Vaguely he began to see a way of escape, and, lighting a cigarette, lay back in his chair to try and work out the details of his plan. Again he encountered difficulties. The gate was always kept locked, and the walls were far too high to be scaled. If he were to get out that way into the fields, the gate must be unlocked. Then for the first time the possibility of asking Evelyn's help entered his mind. They were alone that afternoon, Sir Henry and Lady Brockley having driven over to some friends. Evelyn had never treated him in quite such a strange way as her parents had, and he felt that he could manage to convince her that he was indeed Guy Manningford, and then, when he told her how important it was that he should go, she would surely unlock the gate for him. But, after all, would she ? He was not at all certain when he came to think of it. Things were so strange that he could not tell what would happen. If he could have dispensed with her help, he would have done so. He did not much like asking her to let him escape during her parents' absence, but he could think of no other way, and knew it would be of no use whatever appealing direct to Sir Henry or Lady Brockley.

"Are you trying to invent some wonderful machine, or calculating



"'Miss Brockley,' he said softly, 'tell me seriously, who do you think I am?

how many drops of water we should want to fill the pond again ? "

Evelyn's laughing voice roused him with a start. " I hadn't heard you coming," he said.

" I know you hadn't. You looked so terribly engrossed—as if your thoughts were miles away—I hardly dared to speak to you. Oh, isn't it hot ? "

She took off her light garden hat and dropped it on the grass. Then she selected a chair and took out some needlework.

" If you were just on the point of solving some difficult problem, please don't mind me—I shan't interrupt again."

" You startled me so," he returned, a quizzical smile in his eyes, " that my thoughts are all scattered. You will have to help me to collect them again."

" But are you sure you *were* thinking of anything ? "

" Now, that's very unjust. As a matter of fact, I was thinking of something, and of something very important—to me, at any rate. Listen, Evelyn." His manner changed, the lazy bantering tone had gone, and he looked suddenly quite serious.

Evelyn gave him a swift, searching



She shrank a little under his steady gaze, seemed confused for a moment."

glance, but said nothing, and busied herself with her work.

"I want to ask you something," he continued, speaking more earnestly than she had ever known him to do, yet with a slight hesitation. "I want you to do something for me, and I want your promise. When I ask you, please remember that it is very important, but—if you feel you really can't, then—just say so, and I shall try to manage somehow. But first I must tell you——" He stopped and looked at her with a faintly puzzled look. "How am I to tell you, Evelyn," he asked, with a quaint laugh—"to tell you so that you should believe?"

"Don't. I think I know what you want to tell me. And—and I promise," she added quickly.

"You've guessed? And you promise? Evelyn, do you mean it? Do you really know what you are promising?"

He looked at her, somewhat taken aback, and he was not enlightened by the look he saw in her eyes. There was pity in them, also some confusion and a certain steady determination. And even as he looked she coloured, and answered with a rather constrained smile: "Of course I do. I—I promise to marry you!"

If a bomb had fallen between them, or she had suddenly started up to stab him, he could not have been more astounded. He sat quite still for a moment, as if turned to stone.

Evelyn brushed a leaf off her knee in an unconcerned manner, but her colour was still heightened, and she kept her eyes steadily fixed on her work.

"Evelyn!" His voice was low, and his eyes tried unsuccessfully to meet hers as he leant forward and took hold of her by the wrists, forcing her to lay down her work. "Evelyn," he repeated, "do you—do you——"

"Yes, I—I love you!" she broke in desperately. "Now please let me go." She sprang up, freed her hands with a sudden movement, and fled, leaving him utterly bewildered.

III.

WHEN, an hour or so later, Guy entered the drawing-room, he found Sir Henry and Lady Brockley with Evelyn. They had evidently just got back, for Lady Brockley was still wearing her hat. She and Evelyn were listening with deep attention and evident perplexity to a letter which Sir Henry was reading to them.

". . . will tell you why Geoffrey never came to you . . ."

Guy heard the words, but did not take in their meaning. The startled, almost guilty, look they all directed at him when he entered took his thoughts away from everything else.

"You're back earlier than you expected, aren't you?" he asked, feeling he must somehow or other break the strange spell which seemed to have fallen on them all.

"No—er—yes, I suppose so," stammered Sir Henry. "But—but—sit down, won't you? We—that is——"

"I am afraid we have made a great mistake," began Lady Brockley in her gentle voice, when she was interrupted by a loud, ringing laugh from her husband.

"A mistake—yes, I should think so. And I really don't know how I shall explain it to you—er—Captain Manningford. You are Guy Manningford, aren't you?"

"I always used to think so before I came here," answered Guy, a merry twinkle in his eyes. "I'm not so sure now," he added pensively.

"You must have thought us all mad." Sir Henry laughed again. "I wonder you did not call in the police and have us all sent to an asylum."

"Perhaps I might, if you had given me the chance."

"D'you know, Guy—you don't mind if I call you that, do you? I've got into the habit—I'm beginning to feel something of a criminal, and I'm not at all sure that we couldn't be arrested for keeping you a prisoner. And I don't know how to apologise——"

"Don't, Sir Henry. Why should you, when you've given me the best time I ever had? I've never enjoyed a holiday so much since I was a boy."

"I'm afraid that can hardly be the truth, Captain Manningford," said Lady Brockley, smiling. "You must have found it very dull."

"Dull? Not at all," he protested, with sudden gravity. "I shall always keep a very good remembrance of my stay at Brockley." Intentionally or unconsciously, his eyes sought Evelyn, who was sitting a little apart, and had not said a word since his entrance. For the merest fraction of time they rested on her with an inexplicable look, then his mood changed, and he turned to Sir Henry with laughing eagerness.

"You haven't explained anything yet, Sir Henry. Why did you kidnap me?"

"Well, I thought you were my cousin. He was coming to stay with us. I went to the station to meet him, you were the only passenger who got out, and, moreover, you had 'G. M.' on your suit-case, you were about the right height, the right age, so naturally I thought you were Geoffrey. How could I know he wasn't coming? I've just received this letter." Sir Henry took up the letter he had been reading. "It's from his uncle, to tell me why the boy didn't come. He sent a telegram, apparently, but I never got it."

"Was I so unconvincing, then, when I denied being your cousin?" asked Guy, still puzzled.

"My dear boy, whatever you could have said would have made no difference. I was sure you were Geoffrey, and he, not to mince matters, is mad. Not raving or dangerous, you know, but his mind is unhinged, and although, as I'm told, he seems quite sane at times, he has got some fixed ideas into his mind. One is to fancy himself someone else, so of course, when you told me you were Guy Manningford—well, I agreed with you, because we were told that under no circumstances must he be contradicted—but I didn't believe you."

"So that was it? I own I've been puzzled all this time. I knew there must be some mistake, of course, but I couldn't find any reasonable explanation."

"As I said before, you must have thought us mad," rejoined Sir Henry. "It's very sad about that boy," he said presently. "He wasn't always like that, you know, but he was in great trouble at one time. A girl jilted him in a peculiarly heartless manner, and it seems to have affected his brain."

While Sir Henry was speaking, Evelyn, who all the time had seemed ill at ease, rose and slipped noiselessly out of the room.

"Poor boy, I'm sorry for him!" said Lady Brockley, with real pity in her voice.

"He's got one peculiarity which must be awkward sometimes," resumed Sir Henry. "He proposes to almost every girl he meets. He doesn't mean anything by it, and five minutes later he forgets all about it. When I say he proposes, I mean he begins to, and then seems to lack the courage to come to the point. As any kind of excitement is bad for him, the doctors have forbidden his meeting any girls unless they are prepared to—well, practically to accept him before he has proposed—I mean, of course, as soon as he seems to . . . Eh, what did you say?" Sir Henry looked up at a smothered exclamation from Manningford

"Oh, nothing, Sir Henry. Er—yes, as you say, it must be rather awkward. And so he isn't coming, after all?"

Sir Henry did not seem to notice Manningford's sudden preoccupation, but continued the conversation until the latter, under pretext of seeing to his packing, left the room.

Evelyn was coming downstairs as he crossed the hall. For a moment he thought she was going to turn back when she caught sight of him, but, if so, she changed her mind and came slowly down, while he waited for her at the foot of the stairs.

"I am afraid we shall not have much tennis to-morrow," she said, with an assumption of ease, but Guy was quick to note the trace of nervousness in her manner. "Benton says the weather is changing, and that we shall have some rain."

"I shouldn't get any tennis in any case to-morrow, I'm afraid; my leave is up and I must go. Fortunately I am no longer a prisoner," he added, laughing.

She laughed, too, somewhat constrainedly. "It was terrible of us keeping you here all this time," she said, trying to get past him; but he did not seem to notice that he stood in her way, and did not move.

"I liked it," he declared. "D'you know, I've never enjoyed a holiday so much. Come, let's go in here and talk." He opened the library door and stood aside to let her enter.

"Presently. I haven't time now; I've got a letter to write before dressing for dinner," she answered hurriedly.

"We may not have an opportunity later on. Please come in for a moment; I shan't keep you very long," he pleaded.

She went in and stood by the open window, looking out upon the garden, where already the shadows were lengthening. He came up quite close to her, and very softly, very gently, he said: "Evelyn, this afternoon you promised me something——"

"Oh, don't!" she interrupted quickly, her cheeks aflame. "I—I thought you were my cousin. Surely father has explained everything to you. Please don't tease me about it!"

"I'm not teasing," he said very tenderly. "I want to ask you—to give me that promise again—now. Will you, Evelyn?"

"Oh, please, don't! It was all a mistake. Please forget it!" She smiled, trying to hide her agitation, and turned to go, but he caught her by the hands and held her firmly.

"Evelyn, I won't let you go like this. I love you!" He spoke in low, compelling tones. "I love you, Evelyn! Do you remember the other day when we were down by the river. I nearly told you then. Don't you remember that I began to say something to you and suddenly stopped and spoke of something else? You did not know who I was—and so I had to wait. Now you know, Evelyn, and I shall tell you. I love you!"

He took her in his arms, and the rest was whispered in her ear.

THE CHESTNUT.

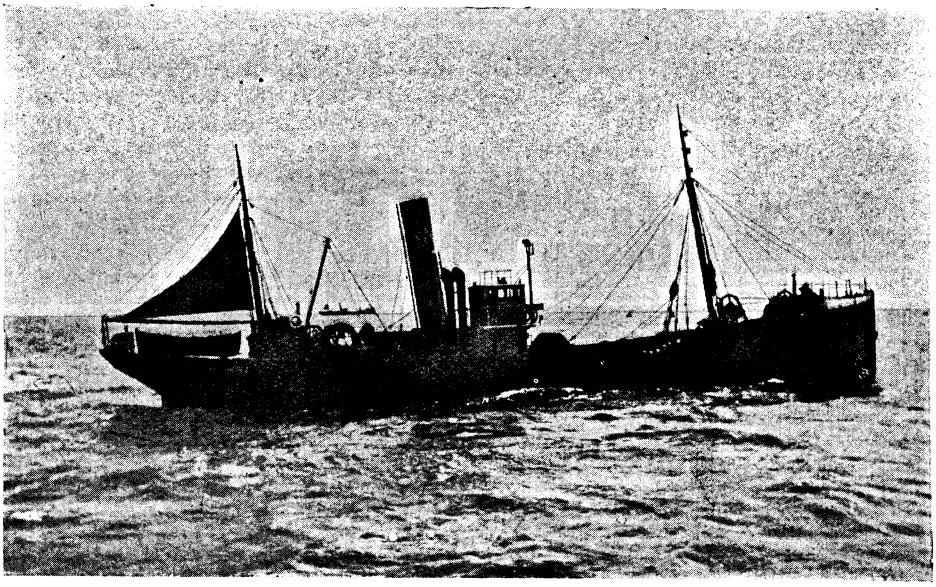
IN wintertime across the street is neither field nor lea,
But offices and houses are the only things to see,
Bricks that stand rank on rank
To front a village bank,
And the black bole and branches of a looming leafless tree.

But with the rains of early spring, the sun of later May,
A green mist spreads across the scene, for, day by golden day,
The barren bough receives
A net of golden leaves—
A veil to hide the houses standing still across the way.

The smouldering buds across the green have burned to summer fire,
And faery builders work by night to raise each chestnut spire,
To build a cunning screen,
White diaper on green,
From which rings down the long street-nave the bird-song of the choir.

The office now is closed to me: no bank proclaims its hours:
The world is just a ball of green, with white and crimson towers:
The scent invades my room
Of the chestnut tree in bloom,
And all the trouble of the world is smothered in its flowers.

OSCAR LLOYD.



IN ICELANDIC WATERS.

ON PASSAGE IN AN ICELANDMAN

By WALTER WOOD

IT costs about a thousand pounds to send a big steam trawler to Iceland to fish and bring her back to an English or Scottish port, and that large sum of money has to be written off before the owner can begin to think of his own profit. An Icelandman, as such a ship is called, is worth to-day anything in the neighbourhood of twenty thousand pounds—I recently saw one in Icelandic waters for which thirty thousand had been paid—and as she needs an expensive crew of fourteen or so, her running charges are exceedingly heavy.

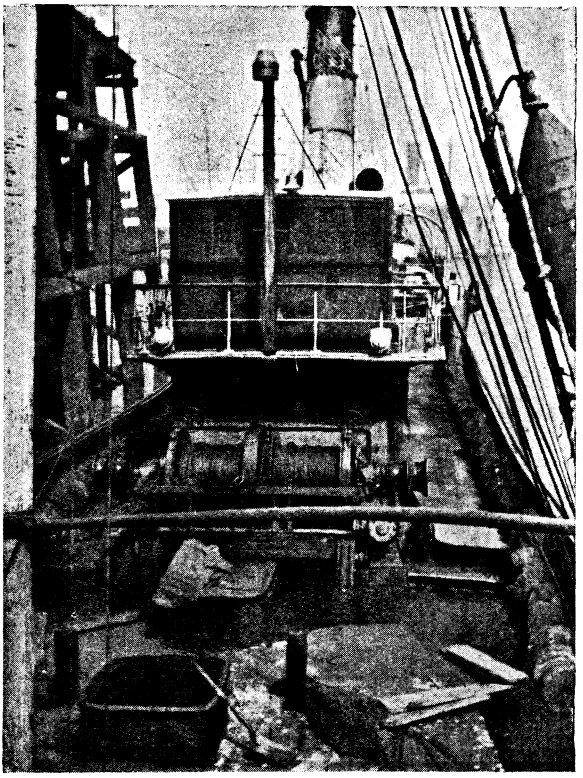
This Iceland voyage is one of the strangest of all sea enterprises, and it stands unrivalled for violent contrasts. On passage there is nothing to do but take the watches, eat, drink, sleep and grumble—and there is a skinful of all—but once fishing begins, existence becomes a slavery. It is a case of shoot and haul, gut, clean and pack, and eat and drink to keep life going and maintain strength. As for sleep, it is stolen in snatches so short and fleeting that they are known by fishermen as "cat-naps."

The passage from England takes about four days, though sometimes, if the weather is bad, it occupies nearly a week. The fishing fills in any number of days up to a dozen, according to luck, and the run home completes a round voyage of about three weeks. Two or three days are spent in port for re-coaling, taking in ice, stores and water, and then begins afresh the steady monotony of the Icelandman's state of being.

Come with me from the biggest fishing port in the world, which is Grimsby, to this strange country in high latitudes in whose gloomy waters fish abound amazingly, and let us see what thousands of our fellow-countrymen endure throughout the year so that some of the best relished of our food may appear on our tables.

I want to get to Iceland, and as passenger boats are few and far between, I have accepted a kindly offered passage in what

is said to be the biggest steam trawler sailing out of Grimsby. We will call her the *Scooper*. That is not her real name, but it is something near it, and will serve, for she developed a positive dipsomania when she drove her head and rolled her sides into the North Atlantic. As a trawler she was bordering on the freakish, for she was built in the year before the War as a self-contained concern—she was to catch fish and reduce it on board to food, oil, and fertiliser. To achieve these ends she was provided with remarkable fittings in the shape of deck-houses and boilers and machinery. With a length of 150 feet, a 25-feet beam, and a net tonnage of 235, she was rather a giant of her class. Her engines, however, were on the small side for such a large frame. They were of 68 nominal horse-power and 550 indicated.



AN ICELANDMAN AT GRIMSBY JUST BEFORE STARTING.

The *Scooper's* complement was fourteen — skipper, mate, third hand, chief engineer, second engineer, steward, five deck-hands, two firemen, and an apprentice. I signed on in the usual way, at the Board of Trade offices, as a member of the crew, for that was a necessity; further, and rightly, a written undertaking had to be given absolving the owner from all liability on my behalf. That liability I passed on to an insurance company, which, on terms, took my unwanted risks on its own capable shoulders. I might have been a "spare hand," but, as a fact, I was "purser," at the wage of one shilling weekly.

There is no romance about trawlers. They are hard craft, manned by hard crews, and they work in hard and cheerless circumstances. Your little cargo boat or ocean tramp does, at any rate, get sunny climes, and strange and changing scenes are part of the year's work; but with the trawler it is more or less cheerle sness from start to finish, for it is a fact that fish are mostly found and dealt with in places that no human being would otherwise want to visit.

On an August afternoon we left Grimsby, the receding outline of which was hidden by the darkness of a thunderstorm, and the *Scooper* was headed up the North Sea. Shattered is the dream of him who expects fine scenery as part of the trawler's run to high latitudes. It exists, of course, but it is unseen, for the skipper of an Icelandman likes to avoid the land and traffic, and so he stands well out when he takes his departure from Flamborough Head.

In our own case there was fog and dullness and monotony almost until we reached the Pentland Firth, and the skipper decided to steam through Scapa Flow and anchor at Stromness until some engine trouble which had developed could be remedied. There were still to be seen the German war vessels which were treacherously sunk, but as almost every man on board the *Scooper* had had war experience, these degraded craft aroused but little interest. Many a fine steamer, too, which had been deliberately sunk to block up the entrance, was still plainly visible, and will remain so, doubtless, until the sea has destroyed these obstacles.

The real penance of the Iceland passage begins with the entrance into the North Atlantic. If the weather is fine—and even the Western Ocean can be placid and

pleasant—then it is a case of comfortable endurance, counting hours that must pass before the welcome news gets round that the last shot has been made, and that the towing-rate will give place to the "full speed ahead" for home.

But if the weather is bad, then the penance is intensified, and becomes an aggravating misery, for much more water comes aboard than is needed for cleanliness, while as the vessel gets farther north she encounters more and more the searching iciness of the Polar regions.

Of traffic there is none, except an occasional trawler, homeward bound, and so to be envied almost beyond the power of speech to express.

By the time the *Scooper* was in the Atlantic I had settled down, more or less resignedly, to the life. Amiably but firmly I had refused to occupy the mate's cabin, frankly because I hated it, for it was away down aft, well below the water-line, and



THE "CHIEF."



THE MATE.

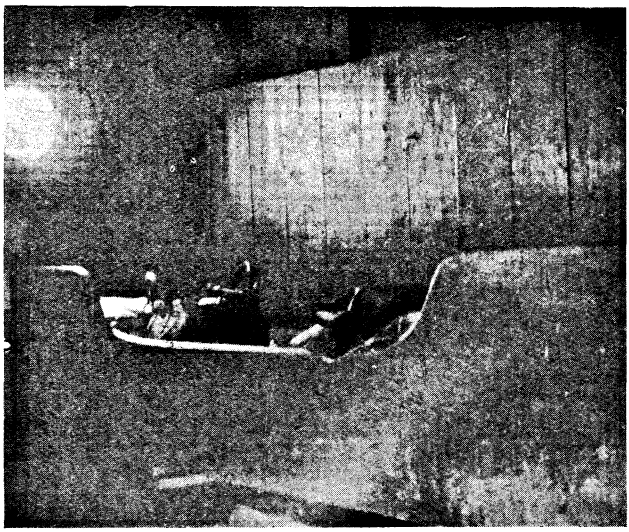
to reach it I had to enter an iron door which also gave admission to the engine-room.

Then there was a descent by a steep ten-runged ladder, and a journey across the cabin to the mate's room, so that you soon found that you were a convert to the discipleship of fresh air. So, not liking the sleeping-berth, I resigned it and made shift in a bunk in a deck-house which had been used for liver-boiling. This place was cold and cheerless, but it was airy, and in case of emergency you had at least a sporting chance of getting out of it, which could hardly be said of the cabin. From the iron door on the lee side the Atlantic surges could be watched to one's heart's content—only the heart was so easily contented.

The *Scooper*, well laden with her coal, ice, water and stores, was drawing more than seventeen feet aft, and the cabin was right astern and over the propeller; but comfortable seats were round two sides of a triangular table, and just above these seats were bunks, or cupboards, in which the principal members of the crew slept, the mate and the chief engineer each having a cabin leading off the "saloon."

Going to bed and getting up are the simplest things in the world for the Ice-

landman. He takes his cap and boots and coat off—sometimes, in coldest weather, not even all these—climbs into his cupboard—very often shuts himself in—and goes to sleep. If, at the end of his watch below, he is roused and a meal is in progress, all he has to do is to roll out of his cupboard on to the seat below him and fall-to on the refreshments.



A BUNK IN A DECKHOUSE.

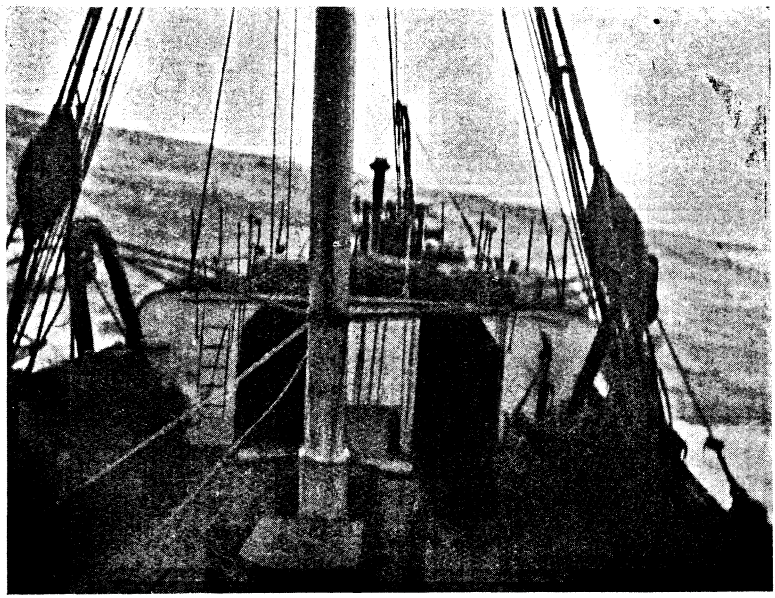
The skipper is a lord unto himself. He has a stateroom leading out of the wheelhouse, bright, airy, handsomely fitted, and in every way as good as many a captain's cabin in an ordinary liner. He can, if he likes, mess alone, but he falls-to with his chief subordinates in the cabin, the rest of the crew, whose quarters are in the bow, having a separate mess-room, though the food is the same for all.

And first-rate food it is. A villainously bad cook—they roam the seas, just as they prowl about on land, though afloat they wear trousers—will ruin any liquid or solid; but we had an excellent cook on board the *Scooper*, a positive artist in bread and "busters," as fresh rolls are called.

The cook fearlessly challenged comparison between his own creation and anything in the shape of dough ashore. "I'll back my boosters against any you can buy," he said, and I agreed. I also applauded the mate's powerful tribute: "He's the best cook we ever had. I could eat his bread for pastime."

Breakfast was at seven o'clock, dinner at noon, and supper at six; and in the cosy galley there was always the tea-kettle handy, or a pan of substantial soup, with trifles like ship's biscuits or rounds of bread to fill vacant spaces.

With so much good, well-prepared food going, all you needed was an appetite, which I possessed, no squeamishness or illness—both of which were mercifully absent in my own case—and agility enough to enable you to climb down into the depths astern and hang on to your seat and your fare. A sample



NOSING INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC.



THE THIRD HAND.

breakfast was soup—a meal in itself—cold beef, bread and butter, pickled onions, sauces, camp coffee, with jam and other oddments as desired. Dinner was a substantial meal of excellent meat, potatoes, greens, and pudding in the form of "spotted monkey," or a satisfying suet concoction with golden syrup. For supper there were tea or coffee, soup, meats of various sorts, fresh and tinned, and on one occasion lobsters, three of which we had taken on board at Stromness. These were for the favoured and the hardy, and, as I happily came within that category, I got my share.

The wheelhouse, in which there are often half a dozen men, is the great rendezvous, and would that one could re-tell all the tales of Icelandic seas that are narrated in it! There are the skipper and the mate, each of whose life has been spent doing this hard, dangerous business. The skipper's father came to Iceland before him, in the little cutters which were called "long-boomers," and had a tonnage in the neighbourhood of forty. It was a long voyage of more than four months, sometimes keeping the fish—cod—alive in wells, sometimes salting it; and the apprentice boys went mostly from the workhouse. There were no tables aboard—the floor served all needs—and there was a fearsome general living and sleeping hole. Salt beef and hard biscuit were the principal food, and so much was one day like another that the poor fellows only knew it was Sunday when the skipper fired off a time-worn joke: "What would you like to-day, boys? Roast beef and plum duff?" And the apprentices, always hoping, always deceived, would answer: "Plum duff, master." Upon which they were regaled with the customary fare. But the joke served its purpose of differentiating the days.

The great feature of the Icelandman on passage is killing time, and this is done by tea-drinking, reading, sleeping, eating and talking, and especially smoking. Cigarettes are smoked almost incessantly. Forty or fifty a day is an average, and a man reckons that he does pretty well if he does not get



IN THE WHEELHOUSE.

through more than five hundred during a voyage. Tobacco, being bought out of bond, is much cheaper on board than ashore, and beer and spirits, which are taken for the voyage, are far cheaper than on land. There is usually an adequate supply of both on board ship. The island itself is "dry"—prohibition has been the law for several years.

On getting into the North Atlantic our Chief emerged from the depths and leaned in the doorway of the skipper's cabin. Refreshment was offered and accepted. His



THE APPRENTICE BOY.

shirt was open, his face shone with perspiration, and his sweat rag clung to his neck. He was a man who shrank from no sort of labour, and I had watched him in the fiery stoke-hole clean a fire-box out in record time.

"Shall I shove her along, or go easy?" asked the Chief.

The skipper was too wary to be caught. He knew well enough what his craft could not do; so he magnificently ordered "about nine and a half," which allowed for all sorts of contingencies, even to a helpful breeze which might drive her without any assistance whatsoever from the engines.

But the *Scooper* did not do nine and a half. We had the Northern Lights, and the mate gloomily opined that we were in for it. We certainly were, though it may not have been the fault of the Aurora Borealis. Sullen slow punching day and night ended at welcome last in Iceland rising dimly out of the cold northern seas, and on a wild Sabbath breaking greyly.

Once more the Chief was standing near the skipper, who was pointing to the steam gauge which was fixed in his cabin. "A hundred pounds!" he cried. "And we want at least a hundred and seventy-five to get us round this corner! If we don't get it, she'll founder!" A few passages of arms were exchanged, reflecting on the *Scooper* herself, her coal, and comprehensively on all and everything that she was and contained; but the Chief went below, and the steam gauge went up, and, in time, the corner was rounded, and the end of our passage was in sight. British trawlers were anchored ahead, and the skipper identified one of them.

The skipper was now in high spirits. "We've made a good 'fetch'—a better 'fetch' than I thought we should make," he declared. There was a brotherly feeling once more between him and the Chief.

The mate, too, was affable, having cast the worst of the Atlantic astern. "It's the toughest passage I ever made, an' that's no kid," he asserted.

"You mean for the summer?" I asked.

"Never mind summer," he replied, and I left it at that, for the skipper had got his megaphone and was about to hail a British trawler which he knew, and whose commander was a personal friend.

"It's old Pa Beanstalk," explained the skipper—Beanstalk is not quite the name—"and he was in my Section during the War. He's as good as he can be."

We steamed up in fine style, the *Scooper* being now in smooth water and apparently ashamed of herself, and I waited hopefully for Pa Beanstalk's rejoinder to our hail.

"What's the fishing like?" demanded our skipper.

"There isn't a fish to be had in the daytime!" he said.

"I'm going into Reykjavik with passengers," announced the skipper. "I may stay there all night."

"You won't miss much," roared Pa in reply. "Fishing's very 'sniff.'"

"We've been a week coming down," added the skipper.

I did not catch Pa Beanstalk's answer, but, as we came up, he was standing on his verandah, hatless, wearing his huge stockings and with his hands thrust deeply into his blanket trousers, and that is the picture I shall always carry in my mind of Pa.

When the *Scooper* was head-knocked by a big sea, and the Chief gloomily declared that she was temporarily stopped dead, because the propeller was working in air and there was not enough way on the vessel to keep her going, the skipper quoted the apocryphal saying of some Flying Dutchman or wandering Chinaman :—

> Eighty miles in ninety days;
> Plenty swift business, methinks

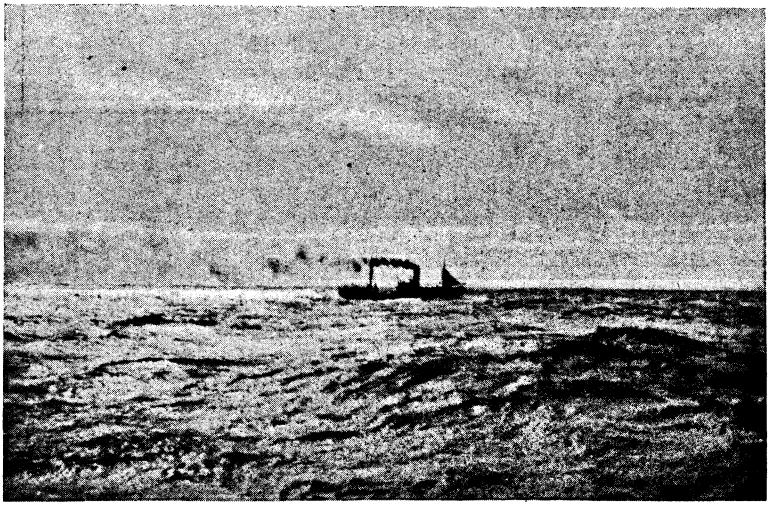
—applying the sarcasm to the unhappy case of the *Scooper;* but now I gathered that it was almost as much as one's life was worth to say a word against that powerful and well-appointed craft. And, truth to tell, I thought with admiration of her tough fights all the year round—and prolonged, exhausting fights sometimes in winter—with the icy Northern seas. Still more did I admire the gallant, enduring fellows who drive her and her tribe through weather that makes many a big steamboat heave-to or run for shelter.

It is a somewhat sombre picture that one must draw of life in an Icelandman, just as one must paint in not too glowing colours the existence of the toilers of the deep; but there is in nearly all our fishermen a strain of brightness which relieves the gloom. And the trawlerman has need of cheerful outlook, for in many cases his whole year, less six weeks or so split into little spells ashore, is spent on the banks in the Narrow Seas, or, as in the case of the Icelandman, in troubled waters and off treacherous shores. In the last winter a fine British trawler was lost in a blizzard, with all hands, off Iceland, and other craft have gone ashore with varying cost in human life.

In the constant daylight of the fleeting summer the Icelandman from Grimsby, Fleetwood, Hull, and Aberdeen and elsewhere, shoots and hauls his gear and packs his catches; in the drawn-out winter, often by the wonderful illumination of the Aurora Borealis, he carries on the same hard, ceaseless work.

Midnight Sun or Northern Lights, it is all the same to him. His task is to catch the swarming fish and to bring it for our tables. How many stay-at-homes reflect upon the courage, endurance, and privation that have gone to the getting of so much of it in these high latitudes?

And who that has not known them can adequately appreciate the friendly help and hospitality of trawler owners and the skippers and their crews who go down to the deep sea to reap the harvest?



AN ICELANDMAN HOMEWARD BOUND.

TO CELIA, WHO HATES POETRY

MY Celia chides in accents stern
Whenever I extol the Muses;
Their gentle arts she will not learn,
Their kindly solace she refuses.



Her face is fair as any rose
That e'er was praised in song or sonnet,
And yet her cheek with anger glows
Should I compose an ode upon it.



Her laughter echoes, sweet and clear,
Like silver bells together chiming;
But soon those smiles will disappear
If their enchantment sets me rhyming.



And yet a proof that Celia's wrong
Before my doting fancy rises:
A living poem, a breathing song,
She is the thing that she despises.

J. F. WALMSLEY.

THE DEATH MARK

By EDGAR WALLACE

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Bones," "The Keepers of the King's Peace," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, A.R.A.

THERE lived in the city of Rimi-Rimi a carver of wood and a thatcher of straw, who had served the Old King in the days of his greatness and had been well rewarded. He was a man of some age, and he suffered from everlasting headaches, and was wont to be silly. Because the Old King's hand had shadowed him, no man dared put him away, though it is proper, when an old man goes mad, to take him to the forest and, putting out his eyes, leave him to find his quick way to death in solitude. Once his own son and heir to his buried treasures had in his boldness stood before the king and demanded the life of his parent. And the Old King had caused a fire to be built upon the face of this undutiful one, and, after the fire had done its work, had sent him to the forest to wander with sightless eyes until the leopards made an easy kill.

This old carver's name was Somobolaka, or B'laka, and he had visions. On a night when Sanders had come back to the city to meet the Woman of Limbi, there appeared before the old man B'laka his dead master, the king. And very terrible he seemed, for he had only one leg and one arm, and where his head had been was an earthen pot. Yet B'laka knew that it was the Old King, and fell flat on his belly. And the Old King had stopped and whispered—

"B'laka, you must slay the white man with the knife that is under your fine bed." And, with these words, the king had vanished through the roof with the lazy smoke that curled up from B'laka's fire.

In the morning B'laka remembered his dream, and went down to the beach, where the soldiers of the white men were standing, and mingled with them. He carried in his belt a knife which was so sharp that he might have shaved his thin beard with either of its edges.

Sanders came ashore from the *Zaire* and walked up toward the city, and something said in B'laka's ear—

"This is your meat, B'laka."

He leapt forward with a yell, his knife flashing, and Sanders fired twice from his hip.

"Lord, I do not know why I did this thing," he said faintly; "I think there has been a devil in my stomach for a long time. Now, being on the edge of life, I see all things clearly, and I know that I am an evil man."

"Man," said Sanders gently, "my little pistol has hurt you to death."

"Ai," coughed B'laka, "and now my sons will take my beautiful treasures, which are in a hole beneath the fire in my hut—my rods and the frankis which K'salugu M'popo gave me when he chopped Fergisi, also the magic hair of the little woman, which Fergisi carried in a hole in his dress.* O king! . . . B'laka, the thatcher, speaks . . ."

He died saying this.

"Go up to this man's hut, Hamilton, and dig up his treasure," said Sanders. "I—I want to know how the Fergusons died—particularly the girl."

A crowd of the city people had run down the slope at the sound of the shooting, and now made an interested but unresentful audience.

Sanders looked at the body of the old man, then raised his eyes to the spectators.

"O people," he said, "who of you saw Fergisi die?"

There was a pause, and then somebody pushed a skinny man through the crowd. He also was middle-aged, and his eyes were filmed with sleeping sickness.

"Lord, I saw Fergisi die," he said tremulously. "Into the great cave we pushed him with our spears, and the Old

* Pocket.

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Woman slew him in the dark, and sprinkled us with the blood on her sword."

"And the small woman of Fergisi?" asked Sanders steadily.

"She ran into the bush, and Mofolobo, the Old King's hunter, went after her, and he came back laughing and cleaned his spears on the ground."

"She died—quickly?" asked Sanders huskily.

The man shuffled his feet uneasily. "Who knows, lord?" he said. "Mofolobo was gone a long time, but when he came back he cleaned his spears."

Sanders said nothing for a while. "Where is this Mofolobo now?" he asked softly.

A chorus answered him.

"Lord, he is gone to his home . . . your little gun frightened him . . . on the day of Fomba!"

Sanders asked no further question, but made his slow way into the city. On the whole, it were better for Mofolobo that he had died when Sanders's "little gun" had shot into the brown.

His way into the centre of the city led him through a broad street, alive with busy householders, who were still searching amongst the *débris* of the huts for their lost household goods. The houses of Rimi-Rimi, with their frail supports and their shaky roof-trees, had collapsed like so many houses of cards under the repercussion of the explosion which heralded his arrival in the city.

The men turned to look at Sanders as he strode down the street, and there was nothing threatening in their gaze, and there were more smiles than scowls for him. To-morrow, he thought, one word from the terrible old woman of the mountains, who was camped on the outskirts of the town, and these half-naked figures who poked amongst the ruins, and whose loud laughter shook the silences of the city, would become veritable fiends.

Sanders had left a petty chief named Kusa in charge of the king's hut and, incidentally, the king's household. He was a mild man with some intelligence, and the Administrator found him squatting in the shade of a clump of Isisi palms behind the shattered "palace."

"O Kusa," said Sanders, "what of the Old Woman of Limbi?"

The man gave the conventional shiver which that name seemed to produce.

"Lord, she is at the village of M'kiji, a long walk from here, she and her maidens and all of the king's guard."

"You shall carry my word to her," said Sanders, "and take with you many precious presents, saying this: 'Sandi, who stands in the place of kings to govern this land wisely and with justice, calls a palaver of all the people that he may set up Buru, son of Kofolaba, who was the Old King's true son. And because the Holy One of Limbi is wise in all the mysteries, let her come down in the morrow, when the sun is high, and put upon Buru the cloak and the bracelet, and give into his hands the wonderful magic which kings hold."

Kusa shifted uneasily, a very disturbed and agitated man.

"Lord," pleaded he, "how do I know what the terrible Old One will say or do? Did she not come with all her maidens and her warriors to make a king the day before to-day, and place upon the beautiful white arm of Tibbetti——"

"Kusa, you talk like a fool," said Sanders calmly. "For when this old woman came, it is true my lord Tibbetti was in the House of the Chosen, but there was no giving of bracelets, and Tibbetti was there because an evil man had defied the ghost of the purple house. And where is he now, this arrogant man? He is in the ground, and the cooking-pots of his wife are smashed, and the roof of his house is broken."

"Lord," said Kusa, after consideration, "how do I know that this old and holy one will not treat me cruelly if I go?"

Sanders smiled unpleasantly. "What she may do to you, Kusa, I do not know; but this I do know, that if you do not go, I will treat you more cruelly—that is certain."

"Lord, I think I will go," said Kusa promptly.

An hour later they brought Buru, the son of Kofolaba, the chief, and landed him on the beach with an escort; and the people who saw him saw that he looked different from all other boys, and were amazed. As well he might look different, for Bones had given him a wonderful bath, using carbolic soap and much elbow-grease.

"Lord, I do not like this," slobbered the boy, "for this devil's milk is burning out my eyeballs and I cannot open my eyes; also it is in my mouth, and tastes evilly."

"Then shut your naughty old mouth," said Bones, and turned a rubber hose on him.

Buru, the boy, had forgotten his terrible experience when he stepped ashore, and the

people sniffed the disinfectant and thought it was beautiful. They brought him to Sanders, who had established himself in the king's hut, and the boy, who was in some awe of the Administrator, sat reverently before him, his hands folded.

Sanders looked across his table, but did not smile at the lean youth.

"Buru," he said, "I have brought you here to make you a king, and you shall do the things which are good in my sight. Tell me, Buru, is there anything you desire?"

"Lord," said the boy without hesitation, "I would like my lovely hat."

The "lovely hat" was that which the boy had brought on board the *Zaire* at their first meeting; it was a battered straw with the soiled ribbon of the Eton Ramblers.

Sanders shook his head. "You will be a king, Buru, and it is not right that you should wear upon your head the ju-ju of a tribe which you can never rule. To-morrow will come the Old Woman, and there shall be placed upon your head a circle of gold."

"Lord," said the boy, "what of Kofolaba, my father?"

Sanders eyed him keenly. "You wish for your father, my boy?" he asked.

"No, lord," said the boy frankly; "but I do not think he will stay in the Bad Village whilst I sit here in Rimi-Rimi, filling my belly with good food. Therefore, lord," he said, "when I am king, I think it best that I should send my regiments to the edge of Bubujala, and that they should destroy the Bad Village, and put my *baba* to the broadsword."

Sanders gasped. "You—you nice little fellow!" he said in English.

He spent the rest of the morning pursuing inquiries about one Mofolobo. He discovered that he had gone, not as the crowd had told him on the night of Fomba—by which they marked the night of Fomba's death—but that very morning, to the village of Sakalava, in the Fongini country. It was apparently the Old King's custom to draw his courtiers from all the five territories over which he ruled, and on the arrival of Sanders the courtiers had melted to their several homes.

On going back to his hut, after his tour of investigation, he found Hamilton waiting.

"I dug up B'laka's hut," he said, and displayed a collection of articles which were spread upon a piece of native cloth on the floor. "This is the thing you want, I imagine," said Hamilton, handing him a flat pocket-book.

It was empty save for a little paper package, which Sanders opened. Inside was a tiny golden curl of hair, and he fingered it reverently.

"Mofolobo!" he said, and his voice was little more than a whisper.

"He left this morning," said Hamilton.

Sanders nodded. "I've just heard that. Did you discover anything more about him?"

"Nothing, except"—he hesitated—"that he has a secret wife—at least, that is the rumour."

"A secret wife?" repeated Sanders slowly.

"This is the story," said Hamilton. "Mofolobo is a Fongini man, and has a very respectable household in the town of Sakalava. Every month, according to local report, he makes a journey into the forest to some unknown destination unattended, which is remarkable, remembering that he is a small chief. He has never been followed, because the forest in question is one of those ghost forests which abound in this country."

There was a long silence.

"Native rumours are usually untrue," said Sanders thoughtfully. "I think the girl is dead."

He put the book away in his pocket, and was a silent, thoughtful man for the rest of the day. That afternoon a message from the camp of the Old Woman arrived. Kusa himself, obviously relieved to find himself alive, brought it.

"Lord, the Holy Woman will graciously come when the sun is at its highest," he said, "and she will put upon Buru's arm the bracelet and give into his hand the magic. But, lord, she demands——" He hesitated.

"Go on," said Sanders.

"Lord, she demands sacrifice, as is the custom."

"There will be no sacrifice in this land," said Sanders, for he knew that human sacrifice was meant. "Now, go to the Old Woman——"

"Lord, if I go, I'll die," said the trembling Kusa, "for no man has stood twice in the presence of this Great Cow and has seen the daylight of to-morrow."

"Then stay," snarled Sanders.

Later came more disquieting news than the eccentricities of the Old Woman presented. He was sitting at dinner with Hamilton in the hut, and they were eating a melancholy meal by candle-light, when the voice of the sentry outside the door

challenged somebody, and a voice in Arabic replied.

"That sounds like Ahmet," said Sanders, rising, and the chief of his spies came in. He was dusty and tired, and had evidently come a long way.

"O Ahmet," said Sanders in Arabic.

"Peace upon you and on your house," said the Kano man. "I come quickly with curious news, and I shall be glad when the little pigeons find their way to your big ship."

Sanders had brought a corps of pigeons with him, and they were being trained to find their new home.

"Lord," Ahmet went on, "six hours from here there stands a village of many canoes."

Sanders nodded. "That is true, Ahmet, for I have seen it," he said. "It is a village of fishermen."

"No fishers live there now," said the man grimly, "for one Mofolobo, a great chief in these parts, sits down with many warriors, and their canoes are painted red for war."

"Mofolobo!" repeated Sanders incredulously. "But this man is from the Fongini tribe, Ahmet, which is a foreign people and far away."

"Lord, his warriors have come to that village secretly, and also the man Kofolaba, who is the father of Buru, who is to be king in this land."

This was a most surprising joining of forces, and Sanders was impressed.

"This Kofolaba—how many spears did he bring?"

"A hundred and a hundred," said the spy.

This was more astonishing news still, because Kofolaba was a man without a tribe, being of the outlaws who live at the foot of the hills; and, as if interpreting his master's thoughts, Ahmet quoted the Arab saying—

"A king raises armies and a thief raises dust."

Sanders nodded.

"And truly, lord, this man says he is king," said Ahmet.

When the man had been dismissed, Sanders looked at his lieutenant, and Hamilton laughed.

"King-making isn't all it's cracked up to be, sir," he said.

"They'll come by river, of course," said Sanders thoughtfully. "They are canoemen, these Fongini. Go aboard, Hamilton, and tell Bones what is happening. Let him have the searchlight going all night, and send a patrol down the river in a launch to reconnoitre. You can reduce the guard here to two men. Bones may want all his forces."

"Do you think I'd better stay aboard?"

"You may, if you wish," said Sanders. "Personally, I do not think the attack will come until to-morrow, after the king is set up."

Hamilton returned in an hour with cheerful news. It was the practice at nightfall for the little motor-launch to make a trip up and down the river for inspection purposes, and when he had arrived on the *Zaire*, Abiboo, who was in command of the launch, had just returned with news that for twenty miles the river was clear of war-canoes.

"It's a good six hours' paddle from the fishing village," said Sanders, "so we shall have a quiet night."

The king's house consisted of five huts, joined together and communicating by mat-walled passages, and whilst their beds were being made in one of the inner rooms, Sanders strolled out into the city.

The six hills gleamed with the meal-fires of the people, and such men as he met gave him a cheery greeting. He stopped to watch a funeral procession carrying a body to the beach for burial on one of the little islands.

"What man is this?" he asked one of the mourners.

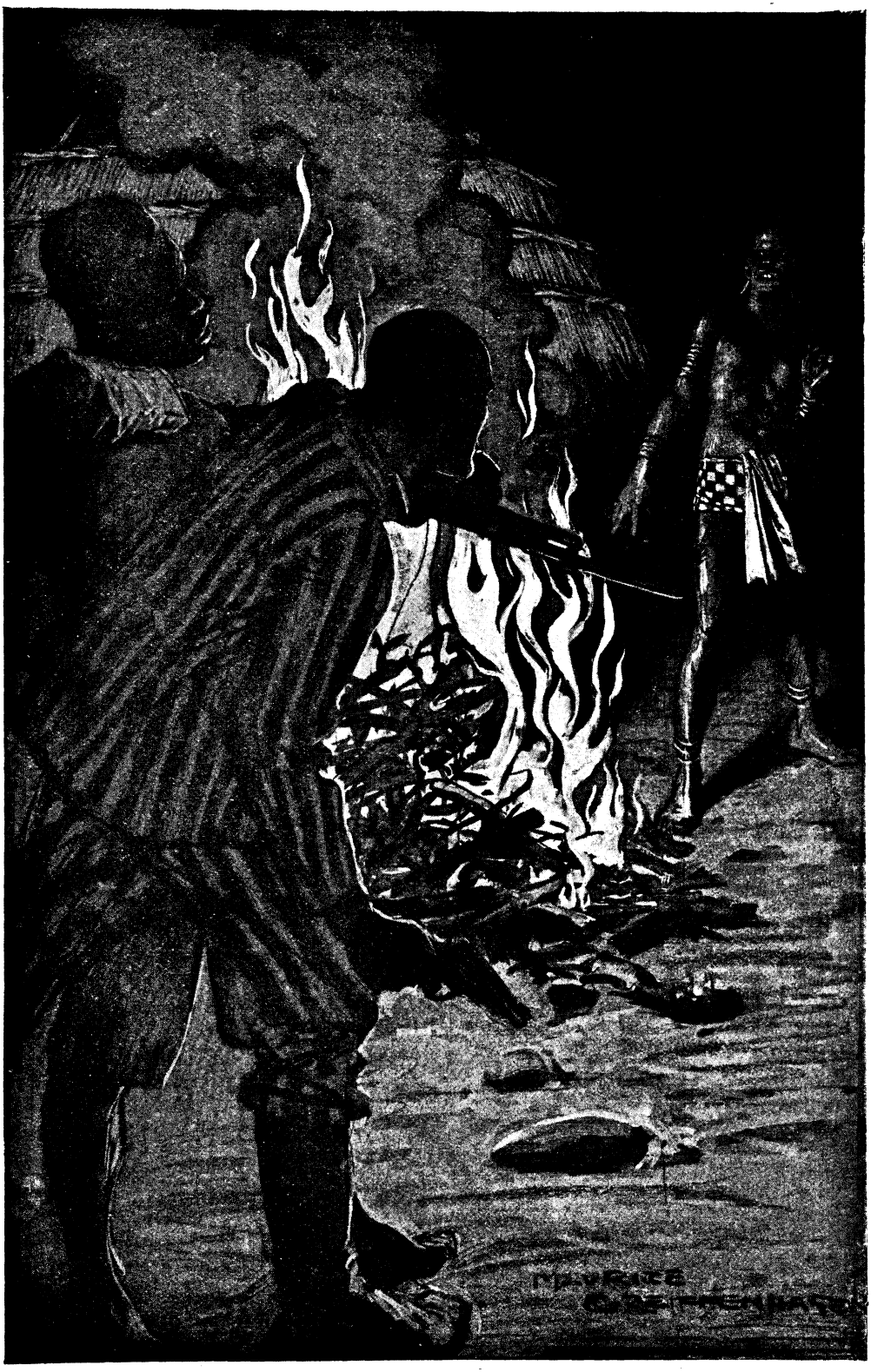
"Lord, it is B'laka, the mad one, whom you hurt with your little pistol."

"O ko!" said Sanders, and made the native sign to avert bad luck, for it is unfortunate to inquire after your dead enemy, though B'laka was no enemy of his.

From where he stood in the basin he could look between two of the great mounds which were called hills, and see far away, near the edge of a great mahogany forest, little pin-points of light, where the Old Woman of Limbi had her camp. Idling there in the darkness, a man passed him whom he recognised by his gait.

"O Kusa," he said, and the chief turned. "Tell me of the Old Woman," he said, "and what manner of camp she has."

Now, Kusa was not anxious to talk upon a matter which was so taboo as the Wise Woman of Limbi. He had suffered that afternoon from pains in his stomach, due, he did not doubt, to his blasphemy of the morning. More than this, his favourite wife had noted a swelling on his neck, at the



"He had not taken two steps when the girl turned with a wild laugh and leapt into the darkness."

very spot, he believed, where the eyes of the Old Woman had rested.

"Lord," he said in a hushed voice, "these matters are not spoken of by our people, for this woman is very holy and terrible."

Sanders had the extraordinary faculty of getting inside the native mind and seeing things as they were seen by men who had a most devout faith in ghosts and devils.

"You shall not speak of the Old One," he said, "and you shall take no hurt, Kusa. But tell me of the camp."

"Lord," said Kusa, "they have made her a great hut, and over this yet another great hut; and between the first and the second huts sit her virgins, and all about them is the Old King's guard."

Sanders was silent for so long that the man began to move uneasily.

"May I go?" he said.

"Wait," said Sanders. "What is this talk of sacrifice?"

"It is the custom, lord," said the man simply. "For sometimes the Old Woman grows hungry, owing to her long struggles with ghosts. And then she sends word to the king, and certain maidens are marked for sacrifice."

"How are they marked?" asked Sanders, who had an insatiable appetite for information upon native customs.

"Lord, they are marked with two crosses of a beautiful red upon their foreheads," said the man. "And when they are thus marked, they are the Old Woman's meat, and she will send for them when she desires. And if any man slay them or hurt them, that is a terrible sin against the Old Woman."

"Then they do not die too soon?" said Sanders.

"No, lord," said the man. "They die in the Old Woman's time. Lord, let me go," he whined.

"Go," said Sanders.

"A perfectly ghastly idea," said Hamilton, when Sanders had told him. "Personally, I think you will have to break through your lifelong rule and chop this old lady."

Sanders had reached the same conclusion.

They sat in the smaller hut until eleven o'clock, as the fires died down, watching the rise and fall of Bones's searchlight.

"Does he expect them to come by aeroplane?" asked the exasperated Hamilton. "Look at that light in the sky. I'll bet any money you like that Bones is handling that plant."

The *Zaire* was out of sight from where they sat, for the river ran fifty feet below the level on which Rimi-Rimi stands, but the white fan of the searchlight, as it jerked to and fro, now hitting the top of a hill, now illuminating the clouds, supported Hamilton's theory.

Not only the two men, but the majority of the able-bodied people of Rimi-Rimi formed an audience at this demonstration of how not to use a searchlight, and the hills which commanded a view of the steamer were crowded with silent and awe-stricken admirers. And when, as it did sometimes, the light swung round and caught them in its glare, there were shrieks of half-terror and half-laughter, and a frantic bolting to the nearest cover.

And now it blinked spasmodically at the sky, the light coming in long and short intervals. Bones was using the signal shutter which Sanders had had fitted for long-distance communications. Hamilton spelt out the message—

"O Kay, dere ole G.X."

"What the dickens is G.X.?" asked Sanders, who was following the message.

"A slight error on Bones's part," said Hamilton drily. "I gather he means 'Ex,' which is Bonesesque for 'Excellency.'"

Apparently, after this message, Bones handed over his control of the searchlight to more sober and less enterprising hands, for the rays of the light went down below the edge of the cliff.

Hamilton rose and stretched himself. "I'm going to bed, sir," he said. "I don't think anything will happen to-night."

It was not until all the noises of the city were hushed and the fires had died out, save here and there, where a dull red glow marked the community fires, that Sanders threw away the end of his cheeroot and walked to the purple hut where the young novitiate king lay.

A soldier on guard at the door challenged him, and he replied.

"No, lord," said the man, "no person has passed in here. The young king is asleep; your lordship can hear him snoring."

"Good night, soldier," said Sanders.

Hamilton was asleep when Sanders reached the hut. He put down the lantern he was carrying and undressed quickly, placing his mosquito boots handy and his revolver under his pillow near the wall. There was a second door leading to a further room, or, as it really was, to another hut, and he made some attempt to fasten this, though the best he could do was to tie the

edge of the door to the door-post with a piece of leather thong. Sanders said his prayers and went to bed.

Sanders always said his prayers. He was one of those simple men who would not have slept if he had omitted the performance of this office. He lay awake for some time thinking, turning over in his mind the almost insoluble problem of this new territory of his. The very placidity of the people, their good humour and tolerance of his presence, was in itself a handicap, he thought. He was conscious of the dark forces which were working round him, and scented the plotting which was in progress in the far-off territories. And then he thought of the Devil Woman of Limbi, and concluded that she was the greatest problem of all. Sanders had known from the first that she was not to be treated as chief or king might be treated—not lightly touched or slighted, either. She must be humoured or she must be killed ; there was no half-way measure. So thinking of her, he fell asleep.

He could not have been asleep an hour when he woke with a start and sat up. His hand slid beneath his pillow and pulled out his revolver. The hut was in darkness, but somebody had touched him. He had a vague feeling that that somebody had touched his face. He listened, and heard nothing but the regular breathing of Hamilton ; yet there was somebody in the hut. He cursed himself that he had not brought his electric torch, and felt stealthily for the lantern and his matches. His fingers were closing upon the box, when he heard a rustle of feet, and the wind of the hut stirred as somebody passed.

" O man," he called, " if you pass that doorway, you die."

" What is it ? " Hamilton was wide-awake.

" There's somebody in the hut. Have you got your torch ? "

" Here," said Hamilton, and fumbled.

A big circle of light illuminated the opposite wall of the hut. It was empty.

Sanders jumped out of bed and, pulling on his mosquito boots, ran through the narrow passage which separated the room from the bigger hut where he had dined. He caught a glimpse of a figure against the light and raised his revolver, but too late. Then he heard the guttural challenge of the sentry, and ran out into the open as the man brought his rifle up to the shoulder.

The Old King's fire before the hut had been kept burning—Sanders had ordered this for a variety of reasons—and in the light of its flames Sanders saw the stranger and struck down the sentry's rifle. For the intruder had been a woman.

She stood twenty paces from him, slim and erect, unconscious of her danger, or, if conscious, uncaring. She was a girl of seventeen, broad-nosed, thick-lipped, and crop-headed.

" O woman," said Sanders sternly, " come here."

" O man," she mocked, " come here."

Sanders hesitated a moment and then walked slowly towards her, coming, he realised, between the girl and the sentry, and seriously interfering with that worthy's line of fire in certain eventualities. He had not taken two steps when the girl turned with a wild laugh and leapt into the darkness. Sanders had a vision of the half-naked body girdled about with a broad belt, and then she vanished.

He stood stock still, wondering what to do, and then, from where the girl had disappeared, he heard a shriek. He flew along in the direction whence the sound had come, and presently came up with somebody who was sobbing on the ground. He stooped. There was enough light to see that the figure was a man.

" Get up," said Sanders, giving him a kick.

" O ko ! " sobbed the man. " I am already dead."

Sanders jerked him to his feet. He heard Hamilton call, and the shuffle of his slippers as he came across the ground.

" What is it ? " asked Hamilton.

" By his stick and his cloak I should think he's one of the watchmen of the city," said Sanders, and gave the shivering figure a shake. " Speak, man ! Why do you cry like a woman ? "

" O lord, lord," moaned the man, " I have seen the *tchu*, the Dead One, and I myself am as good as dead ! "

No more could they get out of him, and left him, shivering and quaking, on the ground, rocking to and fro in the desperation of his fear.

" Nothing has been touched," said Sanders, after making a search of his hut.

" Then why the devil did that audacious female come into our boudoir ? " asked Hamilton.

" I'll tell you where she came—by this door. The string is cut. I wonder whether anything has happened to Buru ? "

Hamilton went out to discover, and

returned with the report that Buru was still sleeping to the satisfaction of the sentry.

"The woman came in through one of the back huts," said Sanders. "We must put a sentry there in future, if we stay ashore. What is the time?"

"Half-past four," said Hamilton, consulting his wrist-watch.

"Brr!" shivered Sanders. "I'm going to bed again."

This time sleep came quickly, though there was greater reason for restlessness. He woke with the shriek of the *Zaire's* syren in his ears and the clamour of howling voices without. It was still dark.

"Lord, they come!" It was the voice of the sentry.

"Who comes?" asked Sanders, slipping on a blanket coat and buckling his belt about him.

Bang!

There followed a whine and a greater crash.

"That's Bones," said Hamilton's voice. "He's got the quick-firer in action. I suppose they're attacking the ship."

They were out of the hut in a few seconds. But now the scene had changed. Fires were burning everywhere. Bang! went the *Zaire's* gun again, and they saw the shell explode on the slope of a hill to the south of the city.

"Get to the boat," said Sanders quickly. "Mofolobo has not come by canoe. He has been marching through the forest. Look at them!"

The searchlight of the *Zaire* made the distant hill as light as day. Sanders saw the deep ranks of the advancing host, their spears glittering in the light. A shell burst amongst them, and for a moment they wavered and then came on.

"Get the king, man!" said Sanders to the sentry; and the boy, half asleep, was dragged into the chilly morning air, and, with Sanders holding one hand and the sentry the other, they ran for the beach.

Mofolobo had sent a party ahead to cut off that line of retreat. Sanders saw a line of men drawn across the little valley, and fired twice into the thick of them. A minute later he was in the midst of a struggling, yelling mob of men, who jabbed at him with their short spears—not short enough in that crush, as it happened.

He heard Hamilton shoot at close range, then his own pistol was knocked out of his hand and he was flung to the ground. They dragged him up and bound his hands behind him with cords that cut like a knife.

"For," said the chief of his captives, "Mofolobo, the hunter, desires the white men alive."

"Where is Buru?" asked Sanders quickly.

"Him we have chopped," was the brief reply, "also your black soldier."

They were making a move, as he guessed, to take him back to the king's hut, when there was a commotion on the outskirts of the crowd, and the warriors gave way before the two men who came.

Kofolaba Sanders recognised in the half-light of dawn. The other man, stout and bestial of face, he guessed was Mofolobo. The *Zaire* had stopped firing, and its searchlight was dark. Bones at that precise moment was scaling the bluff beyond the Hill of Sacrifice, and with him toiled fifty Houssas, four of whom made slower progress because they carried two machine-guns between them.

"O white man," said Kofolaba, "I see you. Now, this is a happy day for me, because I have caught the man who killed the Old King, my father. And presently I shall have your fine ship—I and Mofolobo, my friend."

Sanders said nothing, but looked the man from the Bad Village straight in the eye, and they waited, none speaking a word, till the sun came up over the horizon and flooded the slope with quick light.

"Kill now," said Kofolaba.

But the men, who had made a close circle about them, were shrinking back, staring with horror from Sanders to his companion.

"Kill!" roared Kofolaba, and plucked out his sword.

And then he, too, saw, and dropped the point of his weapon, his mouth open ludicrously.

"O ko," he said, "it seems these are not for me."

It was at that moment that Bones thought it opportune to strike. The two machine-guns came into action together, and the group about Sanders melted away as they were melting when Kofolaba made his discovery.

The warriors ran along the beach, doubled back into the city—in every direction they ran, and as they ran they carried the word, and the two thousand spearmen who had come with Kofolaba and their own chief went pell-mell back to

the forest as though the plague were at their heels.

Bones came up, breathless and panting, and cut the ropes that bound the men.

"Just in time, dear old thing," he said breathlessly.

"What on earth does it all mean?" asked Sanders.

Bones was looking at him curiously.

"Good old Excellency," he said, "have you been working a jolly old stunt?"

"What do you mean?" asked Sanders.

"There are two red crosses painted on your forehead," said Bones.

"It is plain," said Sanders later, "that they were made by the young lady who came to my room."

"You're marked for sacrifice, eh?" said Hamilton, and laughed.

But Sanders did not laugh. Instead, he sent for one of his men, who was a native of the Old King's country, and whose life Sanders had saved on three separate occasions.

"O Kufusa," said Sanders—and it required an effort to give the instruction—"go you to the camp of the Old Woman and discover when I die."

The sixth story in this series will appear in the next number.

SUSSEX.

THOUGH I'm buried deep in the city's roar,
And the soot and smoke and grime,
And the world looks as black as black can be,
And the hum of men, like a mighty sea,
Rolls on to the end of time,
Yet still, through the wearying strife and pain,
There rise up before mine eyes,
Like a wondrous vision, the woodlands green,
And the downs with the marshlands bare between,
And the blue of Sussex skies.
And so, by the power of the Sussex land,
All the pain is gone from me,
And I hear the music of birds again,
And the soft cool kiss of the April rain,
And the murmur of the sea!

AUDREY C. D. MARTINEAU.

MOTHER-OF-PEARL

By RALPH STOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY W. R. S. STOTT

"IF they were as progressive as they are inventive," said the Professor, in his best lecture-room manner, "they would rule the earth to-day instead of in a few centuries to come. I have a great admiration for the Chinese," he added magnanimously.

His audience, consisting of a meagrely hirsute young man, an earnest lady in pink, and an elderly gentleman of funereal aspect, grouped about the great man's chair on the promenade deck of the *Mana*, wagged their heads in unison. They entirely agreed. They would have agreed to black being a light shade of puce, provided Doctor Wigmore had said so. Was he not head of the Manderville Bequest Research Party, that spent more in a month studying the antics of the coral polyp than would provide the normal human with a meal ticket for life?

Yet a few yards distant Ah Fang smoked on unmoved.

"Fortunately for us," the Professor continued, "they have a knack of getting just so far with a thing, and leaving the rest for others to perfect and profit by. The mariner's compass and gunpowder are indisputably theirs, and now—it really is remarkably interesting—ah . . ."

His audience waited in a state approaching suspended animation while the Professor blinked thoughtfully at the Pacific.

"Yes?" ventured the earnest lady at length.

"Ah, yes," boomed the Professor, "as I was saying, I saw some remarkable things on the upper reaches of the Tai Tung Kyang" —it will be noticed that the Professor had said nothing of the sort, but this was an engaging habit of his—"amongst others, the manufacture of half-pearls," he ended with dramatic abruptness.

There fell a momentary silence, during which it might have been noticed that Ah Fang knocked out his pipe and moved nearer on the steerage hatch.

"Fish scale dust adhering to wafer glass," suggested the funereal gentleman.

"Not at all," snapped the Professor. "You may buy such trash on Fifth Avenue, in Regent Street, or the Rue de Rivoli. I am speaking of the genuine article. What is a pearl but layer upon layer of mother-of-pearl? And so on the Tai Tung Kyang they take the freshwater mussel—it being a hardier species than the oyster—introduce a pilule of prepared wax—a delicate operation, by the way—and wait for it to be covered. In six months or less they have a half-pearl adhering to the shell that it is impossible to tell from the real thing, except for its foundation, which can easily be hidden in a skilful setting. There is a temple to the discoverer of the process on the Tai Tung, and those engaging in the industry pay tribute—ah . . ."

Again the Professor lapsed into reverie, and again the earnest lady saw fit to resuscitate him.

"And what is the foundation of the true pearl?" she asked brightly.

"A cestode," he answered—"a cestode that enters the digestive organs and sets up irritation."

"And where does the cestode originate?"

The Professor turned upon her his long suffering gaze.

"My dear young lady," he sighed, "the man who knew that, and could keep it to himself, would own the earth, or pearls would cease to be of value—one of the two. And now what about that return at deck golf?"

Ah Fang watched the party move for'ard and proceed with the utmost gravity to push blocks of wood with a stick. Their conversation, which he understood perfectly after his year's intensive study of their jaw-breaking language at Canton, had been entertaining and mildly instructive. It showed that others were on the trail—on the trail perhaps half a century behind Ah Fang. Undoubtedly the Professor was

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an intelligent man, but how he talked! How they all talked! And why? Ah Fang gave it up, as he had so often been forced to give up an explanation of this people's folly.

One thing, however, he thoroughly understood and envied them, and that was the Manderville Bequest. With such a backing, what could not he, Ah Fang, accomplish? But they did not do things like that in China. Instead, the temple on the banks of the Tai Tung Kyang had seen fit to send its savant steerage. Ah Fang edged still further from the unclean Tamal at his elbow, and relit his pipe.

At Papeete, moored to the coral wall that forms the beach, her slender spars clear-cut against a dark green background of shady trees, the Manderville auxiliary schooner-yacht *Phœnix* awaited her distinguished passenger. There was no delay. A trim launch came off to the *Mana*, the Professor stepped aboard, and half an hour later the yacht was heading for the reef passage, with the great man waving a genial farewell from the bows. He was conducting researches on an outlying atoll of the group. His wife would join him shortly.

For Ah Fang matters were rather more complicated, but when at last, and after a severe manhandling by over-zealous officials, he was allowed to betake himself and his little camphorwood box ashore, there was no hesitation in his movements. As though acquainted with the place from infancy, he plunged into the town.

Papeete took no heed of his advent—Papeete has other things to do of an evening—and, if she had, it would only have been to note that another Chinaman had come to town—another of those inscrutable, industrious yellow men who are the finest plantation labour on the market, and the hardest but squarest nut to crack in a deal.

Past the club, with its inevitable verandah full of imbibing schooner skippers, past the more pretentious French and British stores, the markets—at this late hour deserted and forlorn—through the maze of tumble-down weatherboard hovels emitting the indescribable, unmistakable odour of a Chinese quarter, Ah Fang wended his way, emerging finally on the open spaces behind the town, where the palm groves rise in waves and rugged mountains loom against the stars.

Across a grass-grown avenue of flamboyants two lights glimmered, a green and a yellow. Ah Fang made straight toward them, swung open the garden gate of a commodious house standing in its own grounds, and was about to ring the bell, when the door opened and he was ushered, camphorwood box and all, into a brightly-lighted room of strange aspect. The chairs and sofa were upholstered in red plush. A heavy pile carpet, that looked as if it had never suffered the pressure of human foot, covered the floor, and enlarged photographs of hideous people in gilt frames bespattered the walls. Ah Fang had never before seen the home of a fellow-countryman married to a Tahitian half-caste, but he saw it now. Also he saw the parties to this amazing but apparently happy union in the persons of an immensely fat man swathed in sweltering broadcloth and a dainty little lady in pink silk. They were Mr. Lee How, President of the Lee How Trading Coy. Inc., and his wife; moreover, they were the first persons to show Ah Fang the slightest respect since he had left Canton.

"We are honoured, Professor," said Lee How, bowing thrice.

"That is so," replied Ah Fang, with new-found dignity, returning the salute. "Shall we go where we may talk?"

His eye traversed the gorgeous apartment, coming to rest on an enlarged photograph, helped out in crayon, of Mrs. Lee How's mother. A telegraphic glance passed from husband to wife, causing the latter to pout prettily and retire.

"It is the women," said Lee How, glancing apologetically about him. "They have their notions, and it is best to humour them."

"Is that so?"

"It is so in this country," affirmed Lee How. "I fear we grow out of touch."

"A pity," mused Ah Fang, whose mind was already occupied with more important matters. "All is prepared?"

"All. I have lately opened a small store, under the name of Woy Tow, on the beach road fifteen miles out of Papeete. There will be little custom, but it will serve its purpose, and shall be attended to by a native boy I have engaged. There is ample living accommodation behind the store, and the back-yard adjoins the beach."

"It sounds satisfactory," admitted Ah Fang. "I trust I shall be able to send a favourable report."

Lee How bowed.

The next day one of the motor monstrosities that infest Papeete conveyed a Chinaman and a camphorwood box to the

newly-opened Woy Tow store on the beach road. A few scraggy chickens strutted and pecked about the verandah steps. A cat peered round a corner and fled. Against a variegated background of tinned foodstuffs and brightly-hued prints a native youth, head on arms and arms on counter, slept the sleep of Tahitian two p.m.

Ah Fang deposited the camphorwood box in the back room and passed out to the yard which, as Lee How had said, adjoined the beach. It is doubtful if there is anything more beautiful than the scene that confronted him—the indescribable colouring of the shallows merging into the dark blue of deep water, the white ribbon of the barrier reef, with its thundering surf and far-flung spindrift, that floated and danced in miniature rainbows before the sun, and, back of all, the fantastic outline of Murea. But Ah Fang saw none of these things. They were not the affair of a man of single purpose. Without haste or hesitation he waded into the lagoon, knee, waist, chest deep, minutely examining its floor. There were coral rocks and fronds reflecting a green, unearthly light, delicate weeds like a woman's hair flowing and rippling with the current, shells, big and little, propelled at amazing speed by their hermit crab inhabitants, and that was all—all that interested Ah Fang.

A native girl waded by with a cast-net, flung it into deeper water and dived, appearing presently with a glittering fish between her teeth. She smiled at Ah Fang and passed on. This would never do, he decided, and during the week that followed a gang of Lee How's minions was engaged in the prolongation of the back yard fence, so that it crossed the beach and embraced fifty square yards of the lagoon.

From that hour Ah Fang's private affairs became a matter of increasing interest to Miri of the cast-net. Unconsciously he had fenced off the girl's favourite fishing-ground, and must put up with the consequences. These consisted, for the present, in an eagle-like watch being kept on his every movement. Did he but sun himself on his strip of beach, then Miri knew of it. Did he sit at the window of his room behind the store, bending over an instrument of polished brass, then Miri saw him. What right had a Chinaman, or anyone, to take unto himself the ocean? None. What was to be done about it? Nothing, because nothing much is done about anything on Tahiti. Miri waited and watched.

At dawn of a certain day, and floating upright but motionless in the still water, she saw a heavily-laden canoe arrive at the hated fence and miraculously pass inside. There was evidently a door, but doors had little meaning for Miri. With a few effortless strokes she was at the seaward end and peering between the bamboos. Four men stood knee-deep about the canoe, unloading its contents into shallow water, while Ah Fang supervised from the beach. This done, the canoe returned by the way it had come, and Ah Fang proceeded to sort his cargo with extreme care. It was then that Miri saw what he was handling. They were oysters—more oysters and larger oysters than she had ever seen. Ah Fang took them in armfuls, waded waist-deep, and placed them in methodical rows on the floor of the lagoon. Was the man mad? Miri had seen many oysters taken out of the sea, but none put into it. She gave the matter her undivided attention until sunset, and, returning home empty-handed, received a severe reprimand from her chronically peevish mother.

"It will be better to-morrow," she assured her irate parent, and it was. The next day they dined on oysters.

The process was repeated twice. It was supremely simple. You merely tied the canoe to a bamboo, insinuated your lithe little body between two others, and dived, remaining under water perhaps two minutes. During this time it was possible to collect an armful of edibles, which you dumped into the canoe, and paddled home singing.

But at the third venture things happened. The end of Miri's underwater tether was almost reached, and she had turned to the canoe, when something seized her by the hair, something that dragged her shrieking into the shallows, and she found herself staring wild-eyed into the face of an enraged Chinaman.

She had never seen such a thing before. It twisted into gruesome shapes, and emitted noises for all the world like a choking dog. In the heat of the moment Ah Fang was employing his native tongue. He checked himself with an effort.

"You steal my oysters," he accused in precise Canton College accents.

Miri was too frightened to notice that he spoke English—better English than the *bêche de mer* she herself had picked up on passing schooners. But the weight of his hand on her hair caused a glint to come into her mild brown eyes.

"You steal my fish!" she retorted, with heat.

Ah Fang pondered the matter. Anger had died out of his face, and presently his hand fell from the girl's hair.

"That is so," he said quietly. "Wait."

Out of mingled surprise and curiosity, Miri waited. Ah Fang ambled up the beach and into the store, returning shortly with three labelled tins that she recognised from afar. They were salmon, that doubtful delicacy for which, and for some reason, your South Sea Islander will barter his immortal soul.

"There is more," he told her, placing the tins in her outstretched hands, "if you do not steal the oysters. You swim well," he added judicially. "Where do you live?"

Miri nodded up the beach.

"I will call on your father," said Ah Fang.

"Papa belong me finish," Miri answered, without emotion.

"Your mother, then."

"Mama belong me plenty sick."

"All the same, I will call," said Ah Fang, and watched his diminutive prisoner swim for the canoe with the tinned salmon clasped tightly to her breast.

The interview that ensued was short and to the point.

"I wish to buy your daughter," Ah Fang informed a lady of ample proportions squatting on the mats of a dilapidated grass house.

Miri, being the linguist of the family, conducted the proceedings.

"Mama say what for you want buy?" she translated glibly.

"That is my affair," said Ah Fang. "I need assistance in the house—and outside. I am willing to pay for it. My leflence is the Lee How Tlading Company Incorporlated." He still had difficulty with his r's.

Following this announcement, the lady on the mats commenced to sway and croon by way of displaying her grief at the prospect of parting with so valuable a daughter. Ah Fang moved toward the door, whereupon the swaying ceased.

"How much?" Miri translated, though her mother had not spoken.

"I will pay one hundred dollars down," replied Ah Fang, "and your mother shall be supplied with food and clothing from the store."

The swaying recommenced. There was a pause, during which the boom of the surf and the rattle of screw pine leaves held sway. Then Miri's mother spoke.

"Mama say you marry, all right," announced Miri, a business-like tang in her usually soft voice.

Ah Fang gazed straight before him for perhaps half a minute, then turned to her with the hint of a smile twisting the corners of his mouth.

"It shall be as your mother wish," he conceded blandly.

* * * * *

To Ah Fang the days immediately following this interview constituted an accumulative nightmare. Beginning with incomprehensible alarms and excursions that interfered abominably with one's work, they dragged their weary length through feastings, music, and dancing to a culminating ceremony that defies faithful description. Yet he suffered it all with outward calm. Such buffooneries were evidently as necessary to these people as Miri was to himself. He let it go at that. It must be remembered that Ah Fang was a man of single purpose.

Miri found him so, and would not have had him otherwise. Provided she dedicated a certain portion of each day to the cultivation of oysters, her time was her own, as also were the contents of the Woy Tow store, where she revelled in tinned salmon and pink silk. Before a fortnight had passed, red plush began to make its appearance in the largest of the two rooms at her disposal. Miri was content.

So also was Ah Fang. The discomforts he had lately endured were amply atoned for by an amphibious wife. It was now possible to plant the oysters at greater depth, and retrieve them by means of a cunning brown hand instead of the clumsy net. Even in their treatment Miri came to have her uses. Her nimble fingers soon became no less deft than Ah Fang's at opening the shell in shallow water with a finely-tapered wooden wedge, and by such minute degrees that the delicate fish remained unharmed. But beyond this stage in the proceedings she was not permitted to go. Thereafter Ah Fang took the shells one by one to his stuffy room behind the store, and conjured with them in strict privacy.

What it was all about, Miri had no notion, and at times she wondered—for instance, when the Lee How canoe arrived, towing a half-dead shark in its wake, to be incarcerated in a fish fence partition of its own,

or when Ah Fang almost hurried up the beach with weird marine messes to be subjected to the brass instrument that for ever glittered at the back window. But something stayed her from inquiry, perhaps the knowledge that it would be futile, perhaps the memory of her husband's face when he dragged her from the sea by her hair. For the most part, Miri was content to add trophies to her parlour, or, with her strangely rejuvenated mother, parade Papeete beach of an evening in imitation silk stockings, to the lasting envy of relatives and friends. At such times the most that they could say was: "Where is your husband?" To which Miri would reply, with a touch of hauteur and scathing emphasis on the pronoun: "My husband works."

And she spoke truth. None but a fanatic — or a Chinaman — could have laboured with the whole-souled concentration of Ah Fang. Yet he had his softer moments, when he would sit in state and extreme discomfort on the parlour sofa, and occasionally speak.

"You have done well," he told his wife on one of these rare occasions. "You will make holiday with your mother. There will be a motor-car, and you will visit your fliends for a week."

Now, if there is one thing calculated to elevate the aspiring Tahitian to the seventh heaven, it is sitting back in a bone-shaking machine and smothering less fortunate acquaintances with dust. Miri's eyes sparkled, as Ah Fang had known they would.

"An' you?" she suggested, when the first ecstasy had passed.

"I shall stay," said Ah Fang, and fell to filling his glass pipe, a sure indication that the matter was ended.

In due course the hour and the car arrived, and with equal precision departed, together with Miri and her mother, a bored half-caste chauffeur, a case of peach brandy, and twenty tins of tropically freckled cigarettes.

Miri found it pleasant to sit thus behind a purring monster that devoured the white ribbon of the beach road mile on mile . . . Ah Fang was kind. They would visit the Maevatuas and the Teahis, and show them life as it should be lived . . . Or was it that Ah Fang wished to be rid of her? She had never thought of that. How the wind whistled, and the car rocked, and the lagoon streamed by! . . . What was this secret that stood between Ah Fang and herself? There, they had nearly accounted for a chicken! How it scuttled and clucked out of their all-conquering path! . . . And how long would it remain a secret? Just so long as she (Miri) allowed it. Why did she allow it? Because she was afraid. Of what was she afraid? She did not know—unless it was Ah Fang. She laughed and nodded to old Roo, who stood satisfactorily agape in a cloud of dust as they swept by.

Thus did the purring of the road-devourer stimulate thought, so that by the time it had reached the first road-house Miri had reached a conclusion. She could never rest until she *knew*. Things came to her like that, of a sudden, out of a clear sky, and with all-consuming force.

Leaving her mother to exchange confidences with the proprietress over peach brandy and cigarettes, Miri discarded her finery for the more serviceable *pareu*, and sped by short cuts across the lagoon shallows toward the Woy Tow store.

It is a strange experience to approach one's home as a trespasser. Indeed, the thing is impossible. Miri assured herself of this as the canoe glided silently toward the seaward end of the fish fence. Who has better right of entry than the housewife? She asked herself the question while making fast the canoe, and answered it by peering cautiously through the bamboos.

Dusk had fallen, and there was no light in Ah Fang's room. The place was deserted. Yet Miri dived and swam under water to the beach, and, as she swam, her hands, out of habit, passed over the familiar floor of the lagoon. The oysters in the shallows, over a hundred of them, had gone—to the room! The door was locked, as usual, but the window was ill-fitting. Miri lowered herself to the floor and glanced about her. There was nothing—nothing but a litter of oyster shells, reflecting an unctuous sheen in the half-light, and the sickening stench of decayed fish.

It was then that a thought came to Miri —a thought so stupendous as to leave her numb. Presently it led her as in a trance through the window, which she closed with extreme care, and down to the lagoon, where she slid beneath the surface like a seal.

There were still some oysters in the deeper water. Miri took two to the canoe and opened them with a piece of hoop-iron. Out of each rolled a pearl the size of a healthy pea. She dandled them in her hands reverently, as a mother would her child. She placed them at the lobes of her ears, and

set her head at an angle. Out there in the darkness she trembled at thought of what she knew. Ah Fang could make pearls! As others grew cocoanuts, so her husband could grow pearls. Where was the end of it? There was none. It was like trying to think of space. She sought relief in action on the floor of the lagoon. There were several oysters, but they were scattered. It was necessary to travel far and remain under a long time—a very long time. But there was a pearl in every one, and were they not her children, hers and Ah Fang's? A pearl in every one! The refrain sang in her ears. Her sleek body left trails of phosphorescent light as it darted here and there in the inky water. A pearl in every one! The refrain swelled to a roar as something seized her hair, dragging her down, down . . .

* * * * *

Ah Fang ambled dripping up the beach, lighted the lamp in his odoriferous back room, and, sweeping a space amongst the litter of oyster shells, indited a letter. Here is the gist of it:—

HONOURABLE SIRS,

I write this in case it is decreed that I shall not return. I have the honour to report that my experiments have proved successful. Given the ideal conditions which exist here in Tahiti, it is possible to do all that we had hoped. The cestode is a common disease of the shark, and transmission by injection is simple and certain with ordinary care. I need say no more, except that an unforeseen obstacle at one time threatened the future success of the enterprise, and it is the removal of this obstacle, combined with the strange customs of the country, which necessitate the immediate departure of your obedient servant,

AH FANG.



"The refrain swelled to a roar as something seized her hair, dragging her down, down."

This done, he methodically packed his microscope and other belongings in the camphorwood box, drove into Papeete beside a market-gardening fellow-countryman, and posted the letter.

A few minutes later he stood before Lee How.

"It is necessary that I should leave Tahiti immediately," he informed that astonished individual.

"There is no steamer for two weeks," objected Lee How.

"You have schooners," replied Ah Fang.

It was too true. Lee How made the surprising discovery that he was not so "out of touch" as he had fancied. At dawn one of his many vessels slipped through the reef pass and set sail for distant Raratonga. Her cook was a silent Chinaman, who, strangely enough, never cooked, but sat sunning himself in a deck-chair and reading the English column of a Papeete newspaper. One paragraph particularly held his attention :—

"Owing to the continued ill-health of his wife, Professor Wigmore has been compelled to abandon his researches in the group, and he and Mrs. Wigmore leave by the next *Atua*. It is to be hoped . . ."

The Chinaman lowered the paper to his knees, and a look of mild bewilderment crossed his usually expressionless features. That any man, let alone the head of the Manderville Bequest, should allow such a triviality as a wife to interfere with his life's work was beyond Ah Fang's understanding.

Such things are not done in China.

THE CALL.

MAY, with her myriad flutes o'er hill and plain,
Calls with sweet haunting echo once again;
Wakes for an instant, in the weariest heart,
Memories of youth, flashes of joy that start.
May, with her dancing sunlight, opening flowers,
Breath of soft wind and lightly-passing showers,
Old as the world, and young as yesterday,
In her resistless, never-changing way
Calls through the song of birds, the budding trees:
"Awake from sleep to life, even as these!
Come to the sunlight!" May, with dulcet voice,
Calls through her myriad flutes: "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

EDITH DART.

VERNALAINE

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

TWILIGHT had melted into darkness, or, rather, into the deep blue of the perfect Cornish summer night. The stars had begun their nightly procession across the sky; a row of yellow lights low down along the shore marked the town and harbour of Lostormel; for nearly two hours the lighthouse on the largest of the islands had been stabbing the blue gloom with wide quivering shafts. Carnaby found it amusing to begin counting the moment the light died out, to see if it sprang up again simultaneously with his reaching ten. It was a nice exercise in the judgment of seconds.

The sea was as calm and smooth as glass—so calm and smooth that he could lean over the boat-side and see the stars reflected in the water. He spent much time over that, like an amateur seer gazing into a crystal. The congers, alleged to haunt the old wreck marked by the buoy which he could almost touch with his hand, refused to be lured by any of his repulsive assortment of baits. He had almost forgotten them and had given himself up to the beauty of the night.

Carnaby's boat was typical of himself. It could be managed by one man, and Carnaby, independent rather than exclusive, preferred to live his own life unaided. Yachtsmen in the approved attire, making a brave display on about one-tenth his income, would have held it in polite derision. Carnaby, when he was not in Town, dressed as if he were a mechanic out of work rather than as the possessor of a quarter of a million sterling.

He was staying in Lostormel for the time being, and he had paid tribute to Cæsar by taking rooms at the Lostormel Hotel, which was *the* hotel, and looked as if it might have strayed thither from Margate, and be owned by a syndicate. He would have preferred the older, humbler, and more picturesque "Frigate," but had found it full on the night of his arrival.

Carnaby had taken down the sail of his little boat, and the mast was a bare pole pointing to heaven. There was hardly a breath of breeze, and, unless the wind freshened, returning to Lostormel promised to be a long and arduous business. But he was quite content. A night out there under the stars attracted rather than alarmed him. And while he sat watching the water and idly counting between the flashes of light, he remembered suddenly that he had never visited the islands.

They were five in number, and they were known as the Lostormel Isles. The nearest one to the mainland was some five miles distance from it, and Carnaby calculated that he was about half-way between the two. They were all quite small—they must have looked like water-lilies from an aeroplane—and on each there was a farm and a few cottages, and sufficient acres to pay for the tilling.

Carnaby had been warned not to visit them by one of the golfing colonels staying at the hotel. "Nothing there but daffodils and rabbits," the warrior had said contemptuously, "and eleven months in the year no daffodils." But the colonel had no regard for any place which did not provide an eighteen-hole course and a fully-licensed club-house.

The breeze freshened suddenly. He heard it first a long way off, a whisper of soft air and a crooning of water. Presently it breathed upon him, and he lifted his face to let it ruffle his hair. The time had come to go if he were going.

As he ran up the sail, a thought struck him. He was not tired; he did not want to go to bed, and he did not want to sit in the hotel smoke-room and read the guide-book. A strange restlessness possessed him—a restlessness in which there was nothing heavy or troubled. It was as if that part of him which was still a little boy were saying to the grown-up Carnaby: "I say, don't let's go to bed. It's such a topping night. Let's stay out here."

Carnaby smiled. He inclined his ear not unkindly to the little boy who lies dormant, thank Heaven, in nearly all us men. It was

like a return of the old spring fever, that vague longing for adventure, the half belief that some dear old dream-castle might be found and stormed, such things as a man of thirty-three ought properly to have outgrown. But on a night such as this, a night of quiet and peace and beauty, all manner of foolish little ghosts crept out of the limbo of the lost years and smiled, and made him smile at them so friendly-wise that he had not the heart to put them back.

These ghosts of old dreams had still the power to make him believe for a little while that somewhere in the world the Golden Girl was still waiting to be discovered by him. He saw her now as plainly as he had seen her at nineteen—she had not altered—when he had tried to find some semblance to her in the Kensington maidens who came to drink tea in his mother's flat in Palace Mansions. Such a strange blending she had always been—bless her !—of fire and dew. So delightfully pagan, yet so modestly Christian, such mocking laughter on her lips, and yet so restful a shoulder for a tired head ; half minx, half bread-and-butter miss, and wholly lovable. He saw her face limned out by the stars, and further than that beyond his reach. Her breath and her soft mocking laughter were in the breeze. He turned the bows of his boat towards the islands.

He did not know himself what he expected to find there, but the dreams of nineteen had taken hold of him again, and he wanted to play with these old toys taken from a dusty cupboard. They would not stay with him at the hotel. Over on one of the islands he would find a beach and warm sand, and sleeping dreams would grow out of his waking ones without his knowing when the frontier was crossed.

The first island showed him an inhospitable wall of rock, rugged and steep—sheer as the side of a battleship. He knew that somewhere on the other side there must be some cove or harbour, but he scudded on through a narrow channel between it and another island, as the little *Revenge* sailed between the tall galleons.

The lighthouse was behind him now, and a little swell had risen which tossed him as gently as a child being swung by its mother ; and suddenly he heard a seething sound as of wind among reeds, and knew that it was the sound of ripples breaking upon sand. Looming up before him was another of the islands. Like the other two, it rose high, but he saw that the slope was gradual, that a shelving beach, streaked with little lines of foam, ascended to meet a grassy hill. There the sands were dark, a pepper-and-salt mixture. Instantly he was reminded of the beach in Browning's " Meeting at Night." He ran the boat in. " And quenched its speed i' the slushy sand," he quoted to himself, as he felt it go aground.

He jumped out, ankle-deep in warm surf, and had seized the boat by the gunwale, when a patch of white on a black boulder of rock higher up the beach suddenly moved. It grew taller, straightened itself, and revealed itself in the shape of a woman. She came slowly down the beach towards him.

Carnaby's first thought was to apologise, lest he had startled her, in a tone as reassuring as he could command. But the lady obviously was not startled at the sudden appearance of a stranger on that lonely beach. Her little rounded face was smiling as if she had expected him, her whole manner suggested easy and yet dignified composure. So Carnaby, finding inspiration vital in him, said :

" I beg your pardon if I intrude. I assure you I had no idea that the beach was haunted."

She was all in white, and wore in defiance of fashion a long dress which almost brushed the sand at her feet. Her hair, as he saw later, was the colour of ripe corn, but the night had lent it duskiness, and beneath its shadow her face looked pearly pale. This gave something of ghostliness to her appearance, but her cheeks were plump and round, and, as her smile grew broader—as it instantly did—it detracted still more from that which was spectral in the looks of her.

" Didn't you ? " she said. " But they ought to have warned you, for of course you are a stranger here. Don't you know what happens to the man who meets Morgan le Fay ? "

" Yes, he has to take her out to supper, hasn't he ? "

She looked perplexed.

" Isn't she," he asked innocently, " the lady out of the chorus who's just been promoted to a solo ? "

The girl burst out laughing.

" Heavens ! " she said.

" Oh, of course I know whom you mean," he hastened to add. " Please, I've read my Mallory. Good evening, Miss le Fay."

Whether he had fallen in with her mood or she with his, they had met somehow on

level ground. Barriers seemingly unsurmountable may be swept aside by a joke.

"I am so glad you haven't called me Morgan," she said. "I detest familiarity."

"Heaven forbid that I should offend you," he said. "How's Mr. Merlin?"

"Lord Merlin," she corrected, and added airily: "Oh, busy with his spells, as usual. But how did you find your way here?"

"The wind brought me. Please will you tell me the name of the island?"

"Don't you know?" Her manner became suddenly impressive. "This is the Island of Vernalaine"

He bowed to the hill behind her.

"I never before heard of it, but I like its name."

"If you had heard of it," she said, "you would hardly be so little impressed. What a sad thing a neglected education can be! Well, if the wind blew you here, you are hardly to blame. Not many find their way hither."

He laughed gently.

"Is the soil so sacred," he asked, "that one may not sit on it?"

"No, you are one of the favoured. I can offer you a share of that rock higher up the beach. It makes an admirable seat. Or you can have an armchair if you like—at least, I think you can."

"I beg your pardon."

"You would know," she explained, "if you were a little less of an ignoramus, that you can have anything you like to ask for in Vernalaine—so long as it is good to ask for."

She resumed her seat on the rock, and he sat on the soft warm sand at her feet.

"No," he said, "I don't think I'll have an armchair, thank you. I may be an ignoramus, but I have a sense of fitness. I am not the American artist who drew a poster of Cupid presenting Psyche with a packet of chewing-gum."

She laughed again, warm human laughter, and Carnaby, sitting so close to her flowing skirts, caught himself seriously wondering if a sleeping dream had grown out of some sweet impossible fantasy that had crept to him awake. She was the embodiment of his nineteen-years-old imaginings, warm and living, and had awaited his coming by night to the shores of some magic island.

"You would hardly believe it," he said, "but there are people who refuse to believe in what they call the Arthurian legend. My statement that I have met you will be received with reservation."

"They don't believe?" she exclaimed, with a lifting of the brows. "What, after Tennyson and Swinburne?"

"For a spirit-lady," he remarked, "you seem to be very well acquainted with modern literature."

"Oh," she answered, "we get all the ghosts of books that have been destroyed. So many copies of Swinburne were confiscated and burnt by conscientious Victorian parents that the astral plane is full of them."

"Go on," he begged. "This is a night for poetry. I can believe anything."

"A night for poetry! Let's see who can invent a verse first. When I say 'Go!'—go!"

Both were silent a moment. Then she began:

> "Old Mother Hubbard,
> She lived in a shoe;
> She had so many children
> She couldn't give her poor dog a bone.

I've won!"

"Rotte—I mean, I've heard something like it before. Besides, the rhyming——"

"Does all poetry rhyme?"

"And the scansion——"

"So many people have burnt copies of Walt Whitman that I know him almost by heart. He doesn't scan. Besides, you haven't even thought of one line yet."

"I was thinking of your hair and your eyes," he said. "No one less than a true poet dare—— Besides, I'm so deliciously sleepy."

"Do you mean bored?"

"No, peaceful-happy. The same sort of tiredness that I used to have as a child. I've known you ever since then. As a boy I've stormed the Gates of Sleep to meet you. Don't you remember?"

"I think," she said, in a carefully considering tone, "you must have been rather a nice boy."

"I was. Known to my intimates as Little Sunshine. I'd almost given up hope of meeting you, you know. Now—now—well, I shall always be coming to Vernalaine."

"You can't come back," she said gently. "Nobody ever does."

"You don't know me," he murmured. "If I thought that, do you think I should ever go?"

"You must not try to come back. This—this can only happen once."

He affected not to hear her, so anxious was he lest the least shadow should spoil the perfect hour.

"Did you say that a man might have



"She came slowly down the beach towards him."

anything for the asking in Vernalaine ?" he asked.

"Have you begun to hanker for the arm-chair ?"

"No. But I want—a kiss."

He had dared greatly, but a still small voice within him had already told him that he need not be afraid. She bent puzzled brows above him.

"A kiss ? But is that good to ask for ?"

"Poets have praised it," he said humbly.

"And scientists——"



"'I beg your pardon if I intrude. I assure you I had no idea that the beach was haunted.'"

"Oh, my child! To talk of scientists! On such a night!"

She laughed softly.

"I was wrong. Forgive me."

"There are amends," he said.

She bent over him, and as he closed his eyes her hair brushed his face with the touch of a moth's wings. Warm and soft, her lips rested on his cheek for a moment. Twice they touched him, and then the moment was past.

"'La Belle Dame sans Merci hath me

in thrall,' " he murmured without opening his eyes. He did not open them again until the sun was high up over the sea.

Carnaby woke to find himself alone. There was his boat, high and dry on the sands, there was the rock beside him on which she—— But had there been any She? How much of her had been a dream and how much reality? He blinked, rubbed his eyes, and looked about him in bewilderment.

Obviously he had not dreamed all the events of the previous night. He had sailed to the island—that was certain, since he and his boat were still there. There also was the rock. Yes, that was all right, But the girl? Like poor men who have suddenly attained to great fortunes, he hardly dared believe.

What an idiot he had been, he told himself, to yield to the temptation of sleep,that sweet seductive drowsiness which had come upon him in the middle of that waking dream of his! And yet had he? If she were really a dream, he had spared himself the pain of seeing her melt into thin air. And now—perhaps he would never know.

But when he had stood up and flung off the last shackles of sleep, he was ready to laugh at himself. Of course he would know! If she lived anywhere on any of the five continents, he would find her, and he had but to search one little toy island of a few acres.

He undressed behind a boulder and ran down into the sea, taking a header through the first wave, and, half an hour later, climbed the hill that rose from the beach. His head was clearer now, but he was still puzzled. The evidence of his senses as it was passed on to him by his memory assured him that he had really met the girl. Reason, that stern old magistrate, however, scouted it. "This man is highly imaginative," said Reason, J.P. "And that rubbish about Old Mother Hubbard—just the sort of stuff a man would dream."

A cock crowing lustily on the other side of the hill informed him by deduction that the island was inhabited by human beings. A few minutes later he came upon a farm half hidden in a hollow. A woman crossing the yard as he approached half turned to stare at him. He hastened to the old worm-eaten gate and hailed her. She turned and came towards him.

"My boat brought me here last night," he said, laughing apologetically. "I hope I haven't been trespassing."

She smiled and addressed him in broad Cornish.

"No, sir, you'm kindly welcome. All folks be welcome to land on St. Kevvy."

"Is that the name of this island, then?"

"Iss, sir. You'm from over to Lostormel?"

"I thought this island was called Vernalaine."

She did not answer, but laughed in the manner of one hearing an oft-repeated joke.

"Isn't it?"

"No, sir, St. Kevvy 'tis, for sure."

"Oh, well, I'm wrong, then. I hope I didn't frighten the lady in white I saw on the beach as I came in. Can you tell me who she is?"

The woman shook her head, and her expression suddenly became blank.

"There'm no ladies here, sir. Only us folk over to the farm."

"But there must be," he persisted, although his heart sank. "I saw her."

"Likely you saw a ghost, then, sir. There'm ghosts here, they do say. Maybe she come to make my youngest better. Terrible feverish she were all last night, and me up with her, and not a wink o' sleep, but better now, I thank Heaven."

There was nothing for Carnaby to do but to return to his boat and set sail for Lostormel. This he did, carrying away with him the memory of a girl in white and of a mutilated nursery rhyme.

* * * * *

Shortly before one o'clock the smoke-room at the Lostormel Hotel began to fill with elderly men in tweeds, ruddy after a morning's golf, who proceeded to drink innumerable *apéritifs*, chaff the young woman who waited on them in the approved fashion of Senility playing at Youth, and fight over again their battles on the green. The conversation of hunting men and golfers—particularly of golfers—nearly always reduced Carnaby to a state bordering on tears, but on this occasion he did not hear them. He sat among them with an untasted sherry and bitters at his elbow, wondering, thinking. Even Major Lovelock's triumphant story—a recitative effort which bordered upon the epic—of how he had done the eleventh hole in only four more than bogey failed to pierce the cloud in which he was enveloped. Then Colonel Ninnian—he who had warned him that the islands were not worth visiting—sat down beside him and asked him for a match. Carnaby heard his request when he had repeated it four times, and began to fumble in his pockets.

Colonel Ninnian gravely suspected Carnaby of being a poet. He took no particular interest in such people, but he had an insatiable curiosity concerning—which he called "taking an interest in"—the affairs of his fellow-men. He was never rude enough to ask direct questions, but he dropped hints whenever he saw a chance. He had already told Carnaby that he knew a man whose nephew had nearly won the Newdigate, without extracting any coy confession.

"Well," he said genially, "what do you think of Lostormel?"

This was a chance to be lyrical which Carnaby let slip. He said that he supposed it was all right.

"Interestin' people, the Cornish," continued the Colonel. "Extraordinary superstitions . . . folk-lore . . . very interestin'."

Folk-lore he knew was a bait at which any poet must bite.

"Um!" grunted Carnaby, feeling rather like a tortoise which is being forcibly prevented from hibernating.

"I like the saying they've got down here about Vernalaine," persisted the Colonel.

"Eh?" Carnaby sat up with a jerk. There was a little crash and a tinkle of broken glass. The Colonel glanced down at the wreck of a sherry and bitters and up again.

"Never mind," he said. "Have another one." Privately he reflected: "That's fetched him."

"What do they say about Vernalaine?"

"Oh, they pretend it's one of the islands over yonder where you can have anything you like. Sort of dreams-come-true place. If a purchaser wants too much for his money, he's told to go to Vernalaine. Of course there isn't any such island."

Carnaby stared at him like a man but half awakened from a trance.

"Eh? No, of course there isn't. Now, that's just exactly what I've been thinking."

The "boots" came in with a telegram on a salver. He handed it to Carnaby, who broke open the envelope, uttered a word of apology, and read the message.

"Aunt Hilda dying again," the telegram read. "Better come up for a couple of days. —George."

There was just time to catch the afternoon train. He jumped up at once and hurried away. Colonel Ninnian bent puzzled brows as he watched him go.

"Nice chap," he remarked to a crony, "but a bit——"

He tried to think of a word that was slangy without being vulgar, but, failing to think of one, he gave a meaning glance instead.

* * * * *

The wire came from George Carnaby, brother to the man who had visited a non-existing island; and lest George be thought heartless by the tone of his wire, it must be stated at once that their Aunt Hilda had frequently announced herself to be at the point of death. Like Lady MacDuff, she "died every day she lived." Whenever Aunt Hilda wished to see a few absent relatives she sent out a S.O.S. call and had another death-bed scene. George, who was a Wimpole Street doctor, found it politic to aid and abet her, but announced behind her back that the old lady would be the last of the family to go underground.

Still, the shepherd boy who called "Wolf!" was serious on one occasion, and Carnaby, although he was scarcely anxious, and unwilling to leave Lostormel, obeyed the call. He arrived in Town late that night, and presented himself at his aunt's house at eleven o'clock next morning. The old lady welcomed him in her bedroom, told him he had just missed George, and added without a blush that she had suddenly taken a turn for the better, and might be spared a little longer. She kept him talking for an hour, and then he took a taxi round to Wimpole Street to see his brother, the doctor.

George Carnaby had attained reputation and wealth at an early age principally by recommending old ladies to go to their favourite watering-places. As a student of psychology, he knew that they liked to enjoy themselves under doctor's orders. Having packed the wife of a City alderman off to Scarborough, he received his brother.

"Hullo, Jim! Been round to see the old lady?"

"I have. Apparently you've wrought another miraculous cure."

George winked vulgarly.

"Sorry to drag you up here," he said, "but I had to do my best to keep the old lady's shekels out of the Cats' Home, where they will inevitably go if we don't all flock round every time she dies."

"Perhaps it's as well I came. I want to see you. Look here, George, have a good look at me and tell me if you think I'm subject to delusions."

The other laughed.

"Not rats, I hope," he said. "No, man, you look as fit as a fiddle. What's wrong with you?"

"I don't know. The night before last I went over to one of those islands opposite to Lostormel——"

George brightened visibly.

"Oh, do you know them?" he exclaimed. "Do you know Kelshaw, the old buffer who owns them?"

"No."

"Then you ought. I can give you a letter. Rum old chap to bury himself there. Got a daughter, too—jolly nice girl."

"What's she like? Do you know her?"

"Yes. The old curmudgeon brings her up to Town for about one week every year. About all she ever sees of life, poor kid. Tall fair girl, yellow hair, just about your mark."

Jim Carnaby stared at his brother and gasped. Then he proceeded to tell him a little of what had happened that night and the morning after—only a little, because all brothers have a distorted sense of humour, and laugh in the wrong place. George Carnaby did laugh. He almost wept.

"You can depend upon it," he said, "that that was Beryl Kelshaw. No, my boy, you're not suffering from that kind of delusion."

"But where did she come from, and where did she go?"

"She and her father live in the island next to the lighthouse. She came over in a boat, same as you, and left it on the other side near the farm you spoke of."

"But why should she tell me that the island was Vernalaine, and——"

"My dear boy, she wanted to show you that you mustn't come looking there for any more adventures. She never sees anybody, and you were somebody for her to play with for an evening. But she didn't want you to think cheaply of her."

"But the woman at the farm said——"

"Of course she did. Those people love the Kelshaws, and would say anything they were told to say. I've got it. The woman's kiddie was ill. There's no doctor there, so Beryl Kelshaw came over to see what she could do. Afterwards she came down to the beach and saw your boat coming in. After you'd fallen into what she naturally took to be a debauched slumber, she ran back to the farm, told the woman to say nothing, got into her boat, and so home and to bed."

Carnaby uttered a little gasp.

"If I were sure it was she——" he exclaimed.

"Of course it was. I say, I'm going down to Richmond this afternoon to see the Dowsons. They're great friends of the Kelshaws. You'd better come along, too. They'll tell you all you want to know about the Kelshaws."

Jim Carnaby grinned.

"I've often wondered why brothers were invented," he said, "but it seems they have their uses. I only hope you won't tell these Dowson people all I've been telling you, in your usual fatuous way."

"Discretion shall be our watchword," said the doctor. "I thought it might interest you to come along, as they know the Kelshaws so well. Beryl Kelshaw is Aunt Beryl to the Dowson kids."

Jim Carnaby nodded, and made his last stand to save his face with his brother.

"Look here," he said, "I only hope you're not getting wrong impressions into your fat old head. I only want to make sure that I haven't been suffering from an —er—hallucination."

To which statement George Carnaby replied by winking. On occasions he was disgustingly vulgar.

* * * * *

So it happened that at four o'clock in the afternoon the two brothers presented themselves at the Dowsons' house at Richmond, and were ushered into the drawing-room. What Jim Carnaby hoped to learn from the Dowsons he could hardly have said, but he wanted desperately to make himself believe that the girl on the beach was flesh and blood and not some creature of his fancy. Once he could be sure of that, he had his chance. The proverbial cat in Hades, pursued by the asbestos dog, stands a better chance of success than the man in love with a girl who does not exist.

Mrs. Dowson was not in the drawing-room when they entered, but Connie Dowson, aged six, lay coiled up in a great chair, and jumped down to greet and kiss the doctor and be introduced to his brother. George took her upon his knee and proceeded to tease her.

"Now, Connie," he said, "you've got to tell *me* a story, for a change."

"Don't know one," she said, wriggling and smiling.

"Oh, yes, you do. What about those three brown bears?"

"I forget that one."

"Well, tell me a piece of poetry, then."

There were more giggles and wriggles before the little lady announced that she did not know any.

"Oh, yes, you do. What was that piece you told me when I was here last? Come on! Old Mother——"

Connie Dowson gurgled, looked coyly in the direction of Jim Carnaby, the stranger to her, drew a deep breath, and suddenly rattled off the following:

"Ole Mother Rubbard, s'e lived in a s'oe, s'e had so many children, couldn' giver poordog a bone."

The effect which this rigmarole had upon Jim Carnaby seemed out of all proportion to its merits. He sprang up and towered above the child, glaring awfully.

"Who taught you that?" he cried.

Miss Dowson instantly dissolved into tears and hid her face against the doctor's shoulder.

"Who taught you that?" Jim Carnaby repeated in a lower key. He was shaking now from head to foot.

"Here, steady on, old son!" his brother interposed. "Here, I'll ask her nicely. Who taught you that, Connie, old girl? Don't cry, dear! The big nasty man shan't eat you. Who taught you that, dear?"

"A-a-auntie B-b-beryl."

Jim Carnaby uttered an exclamation and looked wildly up at the clock.

"My aunt's garden!" he ejaculated. "I can just do it!" And without more ado he bolted from the house.

* * * * *

Three-quarters of an hour later he was at the booking-office at Paddington, with five minutes to spare before his train went. The clerk noticed that his hand shook as it fumbled for money.

"First single, Lostormel, please," he said.

DORIS.

SHINE forth, O Spring, with flower of endless leaf,
And daffodil and endlessness of light,
And burst of seed and promise of the sheaf,
And radiant day and night.

And set, O Spring, your blithest airs afloat
In meadows where the sun is bold and strong;
Your woodland paths be all a nesting-note,
Your highways all a song.

Bring forth, O Spring, your finest, but beware!
There's one more fine than all your treasures be;
Nor one new bloom so rare as she is rare,
So very rare is she!

ERIC CHILMAN.

THE BROKEN LUTE

By FRED M. WHITE

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

THE strange and tragic disappearance of Eugene Lastaire created quite a sensation even outside musical circles. It was too big a thing for the newspapers to miss, and accordingly they made the most of it. From such meagre information as the Press could gather, Lastaire had left London for a remote village in Devonshire after a somewhat unpleasant interview with Dennie Morthoe at the National Opera House. Everybody knew Morthoe was the lessee of that famous building, and one of the leading impresarios in Europe. A rich man himself and a musician of undoubted power and genius, Morthoe's great ambition was to form a school of opera of his own, and for this purpose he had sunk a vast fortune in the National Opera House, where he had gathered around him a collection of the most famous singers and musicians in the world. And not the least amongst these was Eugene Lastaire.

He had come to Morthoe a few months before, without reputation and without introduction, from one of the big schools of music on the Continent. What his nationality was, Morthoe had never gathered, for on that point Lastaire was both shy and secretive. That there was native blood in his veins Morthoe had not the slightest doubt. All he could gather was that this *protégé* of his had drifted westward from somewhere on the American coast in the neighbourhood of the Gulf of Florida, and that he had picked up a certain amount of education where he could find it. He was very dark—so dark, indeed, that the suggestion of negro blood in his veins was apparent to most people, which might have accounted for his sensitive nature. But this mattered little or nothing to a broad-minded and cosmopolitan musician and sportsman like Morthoe. It was enough for him that Lastaire was a great musical genius, with an almost boundless future before him. Like most pioneers, he had had to struggle hard; but Morthoe saw to it from the first that he had his chance, so that within a few months the discerning critics began to point Lastaire out as the coming man. And, indeed, one or two of his compositions had already carried him a long way.

It was at this point that he came to Morthoe with a first complete act of a new opera which aroused Morthoe to a high pitch of enthusiasm. The wonderful colour and melody of the work appealed strongly to him, for here was not only a great musical attainment, but a breadth and originality that promised fine things in the future.

Morthoe had literally jumped at it. If the opera finished as it had begun, then without doubt the new work would see the light at the National Opera House. Lastaire was advised to go away and devote his whole time to the completion of his masterpiece.

With this commission in his pocket, he went down to the north coast of Devon, where he worked on the opera day and night, writing and publishing musical trifles in the meantime as a kind of relaxation. And it was one of these slight melodies of his that led up to the tragedy.

It was only a little trifle in the way of a folk song, a weird, haunting, curious bit of work, full of original touches and alive with the fire of genius. It had been published by a West End firm, and immediately jumped into popularity. A few days later a letter from Sir John Follett, the well-known English composer, had appeared in *The Times*, in which letter Follett deliberately accused Lastaire of stealing one of his own original melodies. Sir John's work had not yet been published, but he was able to prove on pretty conclusive evidence that he was the composer of the work that Lastaire had published. And naturally a man so prominent before the public and of such high standing was believed in preference to the passionate protest made by Lastaire that his melody had been inspired by some rude folk song that he had heard in his youth in the huts of the aborigines on the Gulf of Florida; but as he had no evidence to prove

this, and as he was in direct conflict with the great English composer, he suffered. Works of his were sent back by publishers, and it looked as if Lastaire's star was setting almost before it had begun to rise.

That a man of Lastaire's temperament should take the thing greatly to heart was only natural. Seeing himself baffled and defeated, not to say disgraced, and knowing that what he said was true, he had turned his back on London and gone into Devonshire. He had refused to see Morthoe, who still believed in him, and who, in spite of everything, was quite prepared to carry out his promise so far as the opera was concerned.

A day or two later Lastaire disappeared. He had gone for a lonely walk along the cliffs on a stormy afternoon, and he had never returned. His stick and hat were found, but though the days went on, no single trace of the missing musician had been discovered. Morthoe went down there himself to investigate, but, however, without result. And so a month passed, and Lastaire was beginning to be forgotten.

And then a strange thing happened.

One morning Sir John Follett burst into Morthoe's office at the National Opera House in a great state of excitement. His kindly, rosy face showed signs of every concern, the eyes behind the gold-rimmed spectacles were full of remorse. He flung himself into a chair opposite Morthoe.

"Well, what's the matter?" Morthoe asked.

"Oh, my dear fellow," Follett said, "I hardly know how to tell you. I have behaved like a scoundrel, an absolute scoundrel! How on earth I came to forget it, I don't know. Look here, Morthoe, I feel like a thief! I am a thief! I have stolen a man's reputation!"

"Ah, you are talking of Lastaire!" Morthoe cried.

"I am. Now, you know what I told you. You know what I wrote to *The Times*. When I sent off that letter, I honestly believed every word of it. It wasn't true, Morthoe, it wasn't true! I feel as if I had that poor young man's blood on my soul! I murdered him!"

"Tell me all about it," Morthoe said soothingly.

"What is there to tell? You know as much about it as I do. I thought that Lastaire had managed to get sight of that melody of mine one day he called at the School of Music. He could have done so easily enough. And you know I proved that my melody was written before he thought of his. And now I am not so sure. Not so sure! I *know* that I have done him an injustice. My dear fellow, my melody wasn't original."

"What on earth——" Morthoe began.

"Well, it was like this. Late last night I was looking over a pile of yellow manuscript that I bought years ago in Scotland. It's quaint stuff, and must have been written I don't know how many centuries ago—folk melodies from the Hebrides, melodies that go back to the beginning of music, melodies played on a sinew stretched on a bone—and quite unconsciously I must have adapted the disputed song from those manuscripts. You know how things go round and round in your mind till you begin to think they are your own—sort of unconscious plagiarism. Poets and novelists have done it, and why not musicians? I have compared my music with the source from which I obtained it, and the similarity is remarkable."

"That's very strange," Morthoe said. "And yet I don't know. Music, like language, must have come from somewhere. Some genius invented it in the Dark Ages, and it must have spread from continent to continent, very likely in the glacial period, before the great oceans were formed. I shouldn't be surprised if the folk music of the world had come from a common stock."

"Ah, that's the point," Follett said eagerly. "I am an Englishman, and I learnt my music in London. I wonder how much of my work has been inspired by this old folk stuff, if I only knew it? And all the time I have been priding myself that it is my own! I have done Lastaire an injustice. I don't doubt for a moment that he was telling the truth when he said that melody of his had been adapted from an air played on a tom-tom or suchlike instrument in some native village away yonder on the Gulf of Mexico. And here am I, past the meridian of life, cruel enough to kill a genius! That's what it comes to, Morthoe. I murdered that wonderful genius of yours. I am a thief, a charlatan living upon my musical memory! I can't tell you how distressed I am. What can I do? I can only write a letter to *The Times*, deploring my mistake, and do my best to give the dead man back his reputation. He was a genius, Morthoe."

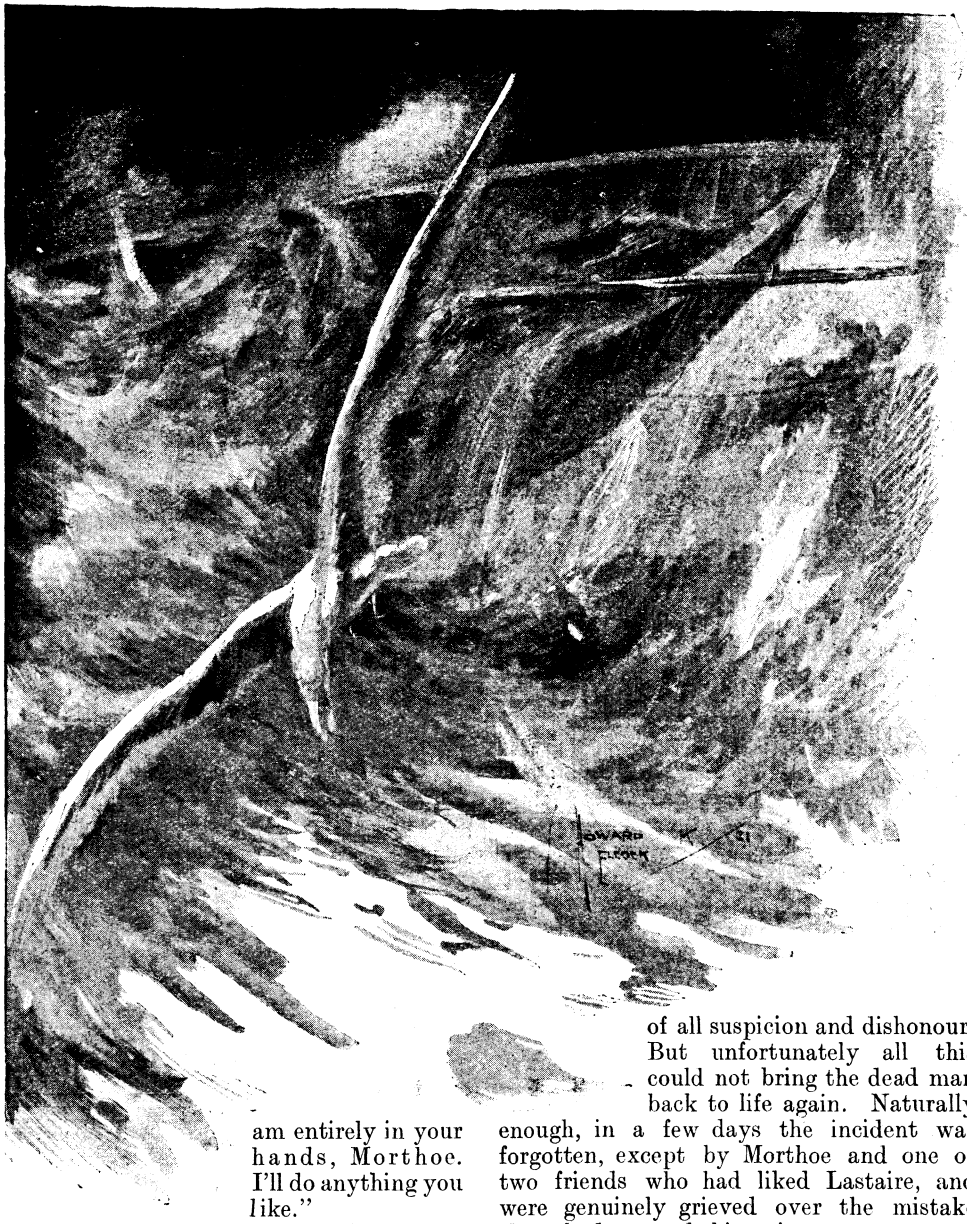
"He was indeed," Morthoe sighed, "and



"When he came down again, he was struggling and fighting for his life in a howling waste of water."

if things had gone all right, he would have stood before the world as the composer of the most magnificent opera we have had for the last twenty-five years. I say that because I know, because I have the first act in my safe yonder. I have never shown it to a single soul, and I don't suppose I ever shall now—unless, perhaps, I play it as a fragment—because I should never be vandal enough to give anybody the commission to complete it. I was going to take that opera round the world. It was going to be the great new work with which I was proud to identify myself. The tour is all complete. We are going to Paris and Stockholm and Milan, thence to America and Australia, and come back to Long Beach and those famous winter resorts along the coast of Florida. We shall start in about six months' time, and probably be away for three years. It's the biggest world's tour undertaken by an operatic company. And, after what you have told me, I would give half what I possess to know that Eugene Lastaire was going with us. He was to have superintended the production of his own opera and, of course, conduct it. The rest of the time I had engaged him for first violin in the orchestra. This is a shocking business, Follett."

"It is indeed," Follett groaned. "I



am entirely in your hands, Morthoe. I'll do anything you like."

"Yes, but what can you do?" Morthoe asked. "You can only write what you have told me to *The Times*, and do the best you can to rehabilitate the poor chap's memory."

And so it came about that the musical papers and others were filled for some days with the strange story that Sir John Follett had to tell. Reams were written on old folk songs, and one of the daily papers went so far as to print the facsimile of Follett's song and the crabbed inspiration from which it was derived. Undoubtedly a great reaction had begun in Lastaire's favour, and his memory was held to have been cleansed of all suspicion and dishonour. But unfortunately all this could not bring the dead man back to life again. Naturally enough, in a few days the incident was forgotten, except by Morthoe and one or two friends who had liked Lastaire, and were genuinely grieved over the mistake that had caused him, in a moment of despair, to lay violent hands upon himself.

And so the time went on. Months passed, and the great world's tour of the Morthoe International Opera Company was drawing to a close. They had been all over Europe and the colonies in one long blaze of triumph, and at length they had reached the fashionable town of Long Beach, where all that counts in America had gathered for one of the most brilliant winter seasons that that famous spot had ever experienced. Big as Long Beach was, it was not big enough to detain Morthoe more than three nights,

On the third night it was his intention to conduct "La Bohème" himself, as he had conducted "Pagliacci" at the opening performance, filling up his time during the day with fishing in the bay, a sport of which he was passionately fond. The hotel in which he was staying was full of sportsmen, all of whom were there for the tarpon fishing, and with some of these Morthoe had gone out each morning until the last day of his stay there, when he took a boat and a native, and went out alone.

It was a perfect morning, with a light breeze blowing from the west, an ideal day for the sea. Here and there along the bay little islands and peninsulas were dotted, green oases in that glorious sea, where the few original natives who were left plied their craft and tilled their ground much as their forefathers had done any time since the world began. They were inviting little islands, these—indeed, some of them were of considerable extent—only a mile or two from the mainland, and therefore in close touch with the shore.

Morthoe sat there in the boat with a sort of glad feeling that he was alive, his mind intent on his sport, which, by the contrariness of things, was anything but good. He had not as yet succeeded in hooking one of the big silver fish to his own rod, and, as time was short, he was loth to leave that delectable corner of the earth until he had added to his sporting experiences.

The copper-coloured native working the boat shook his head gently. So far as Morthoe could gather from his jargon, he was deploring the fact that the wind was in the wrong direction for tarpon fishing, and that it would have been better if there had been a ripple on the water. But it lay now in one sheet of gold and opal and pallid blue right away to the misty horizon, where a few smudges of cloud were drifting inland from the sea. There was nothing else to do but to sit quietly in the boat, smoking and idling the time away until perhaps late in the afternoon a breeze would spring up, and then it might be possible to land a fish that was worthy of the occasion.

Morthoe sat there dreaming, with his pipe between his lips, after a luxurious luncheon and a glass or two of champagne. He was seated in the bow of the boat, making himself as comfortable as possible on a pile of sailcloth, and half asleep, when he suddenly sat up and looked at the dusky native in the stern. The man was gazing out to sea with eyes almost as sleepy as Morthoe's own, his lips were parted as he crooned a peculiar melody gently to himself.

And Morthoe recognised it instantly. It was the very air that had been the cause of all the trouble between Follett and Lastaire. Very quietly Morthoe sat there until the last bar was finished. There was no question about it. Beyond doubt, thousands of miles away from London, he was listening to a melody that had cost one man's life, and the melody, moreover, which was common to that languid sun-kissed coast and the rude salt breezes of the Hebrides. With a curious feeling upon him and with a voice not altogether steady, Morthoe addressed his guide.

"Where did you get that from, Sammy?" he said slowly. "I mean, who taught you the song you are singing?"

The native showed his yellow teeth in a grin.

"Nonebody taught me, sah," he said. "We all knows him. Him come from nowhere. Him sung by little piccaninnies as soon as dey knows anything. Fousands and fousands of years they sung him dese parts."

"What's it called?" Morthoe asked.

"Not called nothing, sah. Got no name, same as gentleman an' Sam here. You give me half dollar, an' I sing you more."

"Go on," Morthoe said good-naturedly. "Go on."

For the best part of an hour he listened, with an attention that Sam found decidedly flattering, to little snatches of queer haunting melody that sounded strange and yet familiar. Here and there Morthoe could undoubtedly pick out an air that bore a queer resemblance to more than one classical bit; but all this was as nothing to the startling discovery that there, floating on the heart of the glorious summer sea, he had found proof positive of the truth of Lastaire's statement.

He came back to himself presently, to the realisation of things, and the fact that a strong breeze had come up from behind a bank of black cloud sliding along the horizon, and that the boat was dipping and pitching on the sea, that carried white crests as far as the eye could reach. The whole character of the afternoon had changed, and Sam, deeply interested in a conscientious endeavour to earn his half dollar, had not noticed it. Then he ceased to chant in that monotonous way of his and got the oars out.

By this time there was not a craft in sight—all the rest of the fishermen had put in long ago—and along the beach the surf was screaming and beating in huge waves. Every moment now the sea was getting higher.

Five minutes ago they had been safe enough, and now, to all appearances, they were in dire peril. With the tide against them, they could not beat inshore; there was nothing for it now, so far as Morthoe could see, but to run before the gale and make for one of those little green islands on the sea.

"We're in danger, aren't we?" Morthoe asked.

"Much danger for you, sah," Sam said coolly. "We no get back—can't be done. Then we make for one of de banks, an' when boat bump all to pieces on sand, you swim."

"Oh, indeed," Morthoe said between his teeth. "I'm a fair swimmer, Sam, but I don't think I'd have much chance in a surf like that. What about you?"

"Oh, Sam all right," that worthy grinned. 'Sam swim before he walk. You no worry 'bout Sam."

"I'm not," Morthoe said. "Now push on."

They pushed on accordingly through a white whirl of water in the direction of one of the green patches, which was now blurred and indistinct behind a curtain of flying foam and torrents of rain. They lurched forward, buffeted here and there by the wind, and carried over and over again out of their track by powerful cross-currents, so that a score of times they were swept past the beach that Sam was making for, and where he knew that the shelter of the curving shore might afford a possible landing for his passenger. For himself, he cared not at all; he knew every trick and turn of the tide and every swirl of the ocean current as he knew the palm of his own hand. He might be tossed presently like a cork on the surface of that boiling sea, but he had no doubt that the time would come when he would find himself with his feet on firm ground again. And so they struggled on, drifting here and there until darkness fell and they lay in the heart of the violet night with the storm halloing round them. There was no word spoken, for they were both busy enough in baling out the boat. And then presently, when Morthoe was beginning to wonder how much longer this was going on, something seemed to strike him and toss him as if he had been no heavier than a feather, and when he came down again he was struggling and fighting for his life in a howling waste of water. The boat had come down violently on the sands, and in the twinkling of an eye had been torn to matchwood.

With the desire to live strong within him, Morthoe struck out wildly, fighting in the darkness, half blind and breathless for what seemed to him to be hours. Then his knees encountered something soft and yielding, and a moment later he struggled to his feet. A big wave, rushing up the beach, caught him violently in the back and tossed him headlong on to a dry spit of sand. By some blind instinct he scrambled forward until, so far as he could see, he stood under the shadow of a fringe of palms, and then it began to be borne upon him that he was safe. A little while later he started to make his way inland, with the object of finding some habitation.

He was not in the least cold, for the night was soft and warm, nor was he conscious of any particular feeling of fatigue. He did not know what time it was, he did not much care. It could not be very late yet, because he could see the big electric arcs all along the fringe of the mainland, and the lights glittering redly in the hotel windows. He smiled to himself as he thought of the story he would have to tell on the morrow. Then just in front of him he saw a light glowing in what he took to be the window of a small native house. He hastened towards it, with the idea of food and dry clothing uppermost in his mind, then suddenly paused just outside, as the sound of music struck on his ear.

Somebody inside the hut was playing the violin, and playing it exceedingly well. And, strangely enough, the melody that wailed from those strings was the same that Morthoe had heard that afternoon, and the same that had led up to the tragedy of Lastaire.

With a curious feeling of tightening across the chest and a strange premonition that something was about to happen, Morthoe crept forward and opened the door of the hut. In the excitement of the moment he did not even stop to knock.

He saw a neat little room, lighted by one oil lamp that hung from the ceiling. He saw a heap of MSS. littered on the side-table, and a man with a violin in his hand standing before a sheet of music propped up in front of him. Very silently Morthoe crept forward.

"Ah, Lastaire!" he said. "Thank God, I have found you at last!"



ROOM FOR DOUBT.

"WHY is May supposed to be the one unlucky month for marriage, Daddie?"
"But is it, my dear? I wasn't married in May!"

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

COOKING BY CINEMA.

THE latest book to be filmed is the cookery book, and a famous woman culinary artist is to show us on the cinema how things ought to be done. Wild adventures in the kitchen, and desperate struggles with rice-puddings, will take the place of cowboy films, and domestic dramas dwelling on the softening and humanising effect of correct cooking in the home will doubtless be released. Here is a chance for tactful husbands.

"Mary, my dear, I don't wish to cast any aspersions on your efforts, but that meat pie we had on Sunday was not all that one could wish. Let us go to the cinema this evening and see the thrilling photoplay "Light Pastry; or, How to Make Husbands Happy."



THE young man was very much in love, and promised to send the lady of his affections a bouquet of roses on her birthday—one rose for each year. So that night he wrote a note to his florist, ordering the immediate delivery of twenty roses to the young woman. The florist read the order, and thought he would please the young man by improving on it, so he said to a clerk:

"Here's an order from young Jones for twenty roses. He is one of my best customers. Throw in five more for good measure."



A DISTINGUISHED astronomer delivered a lecture on "Sunspots and Solar Chemistry." A young lady who met him later expressed her regret at having missed the opportunity of hearing him.

"Well, I don't know that you'd have been particularly interested," he said. "It was all about sunspots."

"Yes, indeed," she asserted, "it would have interested me exceedingly. I have been a martyr to freckles all my life."



THE DIFFERENCE.

AUNTIE: But, Bobby, does your mother let you have two helpings of pie at home?
BOBBY: No, auntie.
AUNTIE: Well, do you think she would like you to have it here?
BOBBY: Oh, she wouldn't mind—you see, it isn't *her* pie!



RAILWAY REPARTEE.

QUARRELSOME PASSENGER: Wotcher give me that narsty look for?
OTHER PASSENGER: Well, you *have* a nasty look, but I didn't give it you!

A CHANGE OF DIET.

("Don't feed a cross husband with meat; it only makes him crosser. Give him vegetables instead," is the advice of a food expert.)

When your husband comes home from a day up in Town,
And demands of you something to eat,
With a querulous gleam in his eye and a frown,
Never stir up his temper with meat.

Supplies of all animal food must stop,
No matter how loudly he shouts;
In place of the steak and the succulent chop,
Try the cooling effect of some sprouts.

If symptoms of very bad hump you descry,
Which treatment with beef only riles,
Persuade him a couple of turnips to try,
And he'll quickly dissolve into smiles.

When he wears an expression of gloom on his face,
Don't venture to ask what it means;
The terrible shade from his brow you can chase
By the aid of a cabbage or beans.

The rebuke which so often occasions you pain
When yesterday's dish is re-served,
"Well, this is the limit—cold mutton again!"
Will then be no longer deserved.

R. H. Roberts.

TOO MUCH JOBBERY.

SCENE: An omnibus. Two sweet girl typists are conversing.

"It's a bad job about Ethel, isn't it?"

"What—about her losing her job?"

"Yes."

"But she's got another job. Is it a good job?"

"Yes. The other job wasn't such a bad job, but this job——"

Crusty old gentleman, trying to read his paper (to conductor): "Here, stop the 'bus and put me down before I go mad!"

GUESSWORK.

Do you know the woman who makes you guess? Then I am sure you will agree with me that she ought not to be allowed to remain at large.

When she shows you something she has bought, she says: "Guess how much I paid for that." Another time it is: "Guess what Mrs. Brown said when I told her about Miss Jones's engagement."

When her husband comes home in the evening, she greets him with "Guess who called to-day," and the poor man has to suggest the vicar, the piano-tuner, the plumber, the water-rate collector, and a long list of friends and relations before he gets the right answer. There would be a chance to take a mild revenge if she would only ask you to guess her age, but that is the one conundrum she doesn't require you to answer.



THE ADVANTAGE.

"I'VE been out to a dance or a theatre every day this week. You don't go out much, do you, dear?"
"Not so very much. You see, I'm engaged, and don't have to."



SOME CATCH.

"So that's your new employer, Harold. And you say he is going to give you five pounds a week?"
"Yes, if my work is satisfactory."
"Ah, I thought there was a catch in it, somewhere."



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES.

"Ah, Mrs. Brown, you are always busy."
"Yes, I'm under bonds to keep the peace with that old scoundrel of a husban' of mine, an' the magistrate said if I come afore 'im agen 'e'd fine me forty shillin's."
"And so you're working hard to keep out of mischief?"
"No fear! I'm workin' 'ard to save up the fine."

THE KILL.

(It is stated that green ringlets, now the vogue in some circles, show better results in bringing down the quarry than peroxide.)

When Rosamunda took up sport—
That is, the *human* chase—
Although in stature rather short,
She had a pleasant face,
So turned it tenderly on Bill—
Whose other name was Brown—
And hunted him with vigour, still,
She *couldn't* "pull him down."

In spite of all the tricks she knew,
He still retained a start,
Although he always kept in view—
***That* was the trying part.**
Until, dejected and depressed
With all the wear and tear,
Poor Rosamunda sadly guessed
The fault lay in her *hair*.

By nature it was frankly brown—
Her rivals called it *drab*.
She bought some stuff and plied her crown
With surreptitious dab;
But even when her tresses bore
A lustrous golden tint,
Though more devoted than before,
Bill failed to take the hint.

But Rosie knew him short of wind—
So screaming was the pace—
And, sprinting recklessly, she pinned
***Green* ringlets round her face.**
Their verdant verdure sapped his strength—
They fairly outed Bill—
Rose had him "rolling beat" at length,
And registered her kill.

Jessie Pope.

DANCING WHIST.

THE Entertainments Committee was arranging its programme for the season, and striving to think of something novel, when William announced that he had just had a brain-wave. The other members appeared surprised, as up to then they had imagined that William had no brain to be waved.

"How about a combined whist drive and dance?" he asked. They all declared it had been done before. "Not my way," said William, and proceeded to explain. "At the end of every hand the band strikes up, and each gentleman seizes his card partner, and all waltz, jazz, fox-trot, or one-step according to what happens to be trumps, twice round the room and back to places by the time the bell rings."

"My dear idiot," exclaimed the chairman severely, "if you have nothing less footling than that to suggest, we had better pass on to the next business."

And thus a brilliant idea was nipped in the bud.

THE DUMB PIANO.

"WHAT did your maid mean when she asked if she should get the afternoon tea-cloth out of the piano?" asked a lady visitor of her hostess. "It seems such a strange place——"

"Yes, I know. She ought not to have mentioned it, but it's a scheme of John's. You see, pianos are so frightfully dear, we positively couldn't afford to buy one, so we just had the case without the works, which comes ever so much cheaper. It makes an ideal place for storing household linen in, and the keyboard space is fitted as a cutlery chest. Neither John nor I play, and we always keep it locked, so no one is any the wiser."

But a dumb piano—what a splendid idea!



UNNATURAL HISTORY.

KINDLY OLD GENTLEMAN: Ah, I see you have a cuckoo's egg there, my boy.

THE YOUTH: Gaon! 'Oo yer gettin' at? Don't yer know cuckoos don't lay their own eggs?

DURING the *viva voce* hour in a certain school the instructor asked her pupils what wonders were to be seen to-day that were not in existence fifty years ago.

There were many answers—aeroplanes, the telegraph, the telephone, electric lighting, motors, etc. Finally one little fellow contributed his wonder:

"Me and my little brother."

MR. RICHQUICK: Look here, my dear, I'm going to get a couple of footmen. Other big places have them.

MRS. RICHQUICK: Oh, dear me, how extravagant! Surely one man could attend to both your feet?



Do You Value Personal Attraction?

If so, you cannot afford to despise so indispensable an accessory as pearls, which have a remarkable aptitude for enhancing the wearer's natural charms.

They are a DISTINCTIVE FINISH to an elegant evening toilette, a stylish afternoon frock, or a charming blouse.

The truly feminine woman loves pearls because of their beauty and responsiveness and, above all, for their adaptability to all occasions; hence, if wise, she will exercise the same taste and discrimination in selecting these as in the choice of her gowns.

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Other lengths at proportionate rate—gold clasp 2/6 extra.
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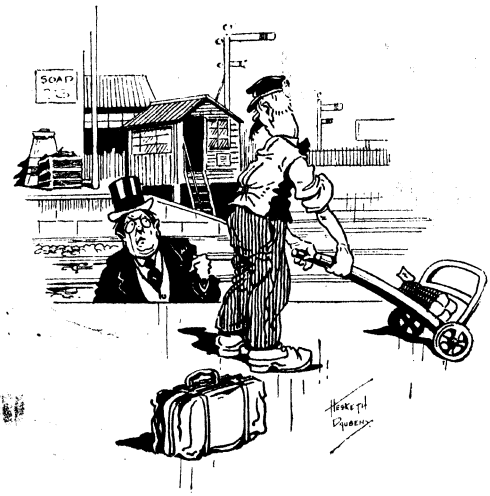
THEY WERE THREE.

Three 'buses once I chanced to see
Together at one stopping-place.
The reason for it puzzled me:
I wondered why there should be three—
Perhaps it was a race.

A man I asked said: "What looks queer
Is very simple, you will find.
Let's see if I can make it clear:
The one behind's in front, my dear,
The one in front's behind."

I had to let him have his way,
His manner was so very blunt,
But it was strange to hear him say:
"The front one is behind to-day,
The one behind's in front."

K.



NO TIME TO WASTE.

"PORTER, where do I catch the express?"

"You won't 'ave no choice, guv'nor, if you don't 'op it pretty smart off that line."

EVERY ship carries the sort of passenger who seems to have devoted his whole life to making a record in the matter of Atlantic crossings.

A girl was once making a little fun of a passenger of this type. He said to her:

"Do you know, this is my forty-ninth crossing!"

"Is it?" she said indifferently. "It's my one hundred and eighth."

"Really?" the man exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, indeed," she answered, yawning. "It's an old story to me, crossing the Atlantic. Why, actually, I always recognise more than half of the waves we meet!"



UNREASONABLE.

CUSTOMER: 'Ere, take this back, guv'nor—there's three flies in it!

PROPRIETOR: Well, what d'yer expect fer a penny—butterflies?

A WELL-KNOWN clubman was a victim of frequent sleeplessness. Various methods were tried to send him to sleep, but all in vain. At last his friends and family resorted to a new experiment. They arranged that, instead of going home from his club, he should at midnight be dressed in the uniform of a night-porter of the club and placed in that official's box, with a watchman's electric torch in his hand, ready for use, and in ten minutes he was fast asleep.

LITTLE Ethel had just had explained to her the difference between a major and a minor chord. "Now," said her music mistress. "listen while I play each chord in turn, and tell me which you prefer."

Ethel listened carefully, then answered gravely: "I think I like the colonel best."

Two mothers, whose sons are at different Universities, frequently compare notes as to the progress of the young men, as shown by their letters home.

"Henry's letters always send me to the dictionary," said one mother.

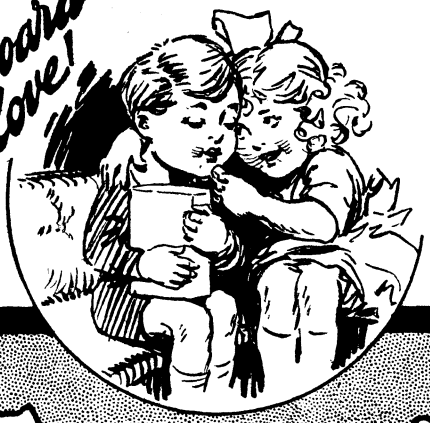
"You're lucky," sighed her friend. "My boy's letters always send me to the bank."

SPRING POETRY.

Whenever it's Spring
I seem to write lyrics
Of birds on the wing;
Whenever it's Spring
I describe how they sing
In fool panegyrics;
Whenever it's Spring
I *seem* to write lyrics!

Carolyn Wells.

Cupboard Love!



Just like all the girls, she knows he's got the goods, and she loves him for it—Cissie's right this time, and you can't blame her for it.

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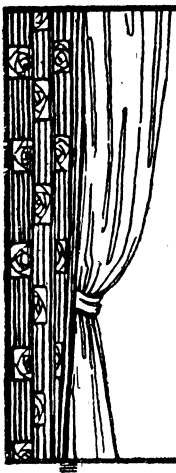
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My CURTAINS don't seem to hang right

and they need cleaning. I'll send them to EASTMAN'S—as I did last year.

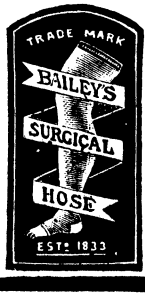
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A GOLF ENQUIRY.

A SEASIDE town had just completed a golf course and an artistic country club-house. The formal opening took place, and famous golfers came to play the first match over the course. The local newspapers gave much space to the occasion, and everywhere golf formed the subject of conversation.

Several weeks later an old countryman came to town, and, going up to one of the leading townsmen, asked:

"What's all this golf business I been readin' about so much? I want to know what it is."

"You do?" replied the resident. "Well, we have about a hundred and fifty acres of the finest land out here on the river—— But come, let's go out to see it."

So they motored to the links and climbed up a hill to overlook it all. The countryman saw the river winding away on his left, the surrounding hills, and the sheep belonging to the club down in the valley. Finally the local resident said:

"Well, what do you think of it all? Fine, isn't it?"

"Well," replied the countryman, "them golfs, ef they be golfs, is the most like sheep uv anything ever I saw."



THE Smithsons, father and son, were having their photograph taken, when the photographer said:

"I think, sir, that it will make a better picture if you will put your hand on your father's shoulder."

Whereupon the elder Smithson grinned and said: "It would make a more natural picture if he put his hand inside my pocket."



A LANK, disconsolate-looking farmer stood on the steps of the town hall during the progress of a political meeting.

"Do you know who's talking in there now," demanded a stranger briskly, pausing for a moment beside the farmer, "or are you just going in?"

"No, sir, I've just come out," said the farmer decidedly. "A Member of Parliament is talking in there."

"What about?" asked the stranger.

"Well," continued the countryman, passing a knotted hand across his forehead, "he didn't say."



A BAD DATE.

HARASSED HOUSEHOLDER (to burglar): "I say, hadn't you better wait till another time? We've just pawned our silver to pay the income-tax.



LITTLE TOPKINS (whose brand of cigarettes is extremely doubtful): Have a cigarette, old chap?

HIS FRIEND: No, thanks; I'm a smoker!

BEAUTY CULTURE

Some Simple Recipes that give Startling Results

By MIMOSA

Getting Rid of Feminine Moustaches.

TO women who are annoyed by disfiguring downy hair growths a method of permanently eradicating the same will come as a piece of good news. For this purpose pure powdered pheminol may be used. Almost any chemist should be able to supply an ounce of this drug. The recommended treatment is designed, not only to remove the disfiguring growth instantly, leaving no trace, but also to actually kill the hair roots without irritating the skin.



How to have Thick and Pretty Hair.

SOAPS and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft, and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely, and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed ¼ lb. packages, which retail at half-a-crown. However, as this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, it really works out very cheaply in the end.

Blackheads, Oily Pores, etc.

THE new sparkling face-bath treatment rids the skin of blackheads, oiliness, and enlarged pores almost instantly. It is perfectly harmless, pleasant, and immediately effective. All you have to do is to drop a stymol tablet, obtained from the chemist's, in a glass of hot water, and after the resulting effervescence has subsided, dab the affected portions of the face freely with the liquid. When you dry the face you will find that the blackheads come right off on the towel, the large pores contract and efface themselves naturally, and the greasiness is all gone, leaving the skin smooth, soft, and cool. This treatment should be repeated a few times at intervals of several days in order to make sure that the result shall be permanent.

Home Made Hair Tonic.

MY acquaintances say that a good stimulant to the natural growth of the hair is a very simple, effective and safe stimulating lotion made up by mixing one ounce of boranium with ¼ pint of bay rum. This may be applied to the hair roots occasionally with the finger tips with good results.

The Curling Iron.

DON'T use a hot iron to curl your hair. Some of my friends make the cunningest sort of curls wherever they want them simply by dampening the hair with liquid silmerine before retiring at night. When the hair is dry in the morning it will be softly curly just where you want it to be. This method is perfectly harmless, even beneficial to the hair, and the curls last a long time. The liquid is quite pleasant, and neither sticky nor greasy.

How to Discard an Unsightly Complexion.

HOW many women exclaim as they behold their ugly complexion in the mirror: "If I could only tear off this old skin!" And do you know it is now possible to do that very thing? Not to actually remove the entire skin all of a sudden; that would be too heroic a method, and painful, too, I imagine. The worn-out cuticle comes off in such tiny particles, and so gradually—requiring about ten days to complete the transformation—it doesn't hurt a bit. Day by day the beautiful complexion underneath comes forth. Marvellous! No matter how muddy, rough, blotchy, or aged your complexion, you can surely discard it by this simple process. Just get some ordinary mercolized wax at your chemist's, apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off in the mornings.

CATCHING THE EARLY MORNING TRAIN.

By Leslie M. Oyler.

"I MUST catch the eight-thirty train to-morrow morning," I said, when Sinclair dissuaded me from going back to Town on Sunday night. "Rather early for you, I'm afraid."

"Not a bit," he assured me. "Mrs. Jenkins will get us some breakfast in good time, and I'll run you down to the station in the car."

I had been spending a few days with him; he lived right away in the wilds, miles from anywhere. His "staff" consisted of an old housekeeper, who looked after him extremely well, even to reminding him of his engagements, for Sinclair was incurably casual. He had a way, when driving guests to the station, of cutting it so fine that I had often had to tumble out of the car and into the guard's van as the train went off.

On this occasion I was taking no risks—my appointment in Town was very important; I couldn't chance missing it—so I hurried through breakfast, which was punctual, then dragged Sinclair off to the garage.

"There's loads of time," he protested, as he got the car out; "you could roll to the station. Hang it all, she's punctured! I'd clean forgotten that, and I haven't a spare tyre. Well, you'll have to go by a later train—all the better."

"Impossible!" I said. "I must go now. Lend me a bicycle, there's a good chap."

He routed out a rusty-looking machine.

"Haven't ridden it for some time," he said, "but I expect it will go."

I devoutly hoped so. We had wasted a good ten minutes already, and, shouting good-bye, I pedalled down the hill for all I was worth.

For some miles the old tank went fairly well; then the back tyre gradually sank till I was riding on the rim.

I pounded along, hoping for a lift, but the country was so lonely that there seemed no chance of this. If you've never ridden a flat tyre on bumpy roads, trying to carry a suit-case and catch an early train, you have no idea of my sufferings. I struggled on somehow till I was actually fairly near the station; but my luck was out that day—a sharp hill and some sharper flints finished me and the bicycle off.

I mopped my brow and looked at my watch. Only eight minutes more! To be beaten like this in the last lap infuriated me; and just then a butcher's cart hove in sight.

I explained matters to the driver, offered him a substantial bribe to get me to the station in seven minutes, hauled that wretched piece of scrap-iron up to the back of the cart, and we started.

"Doubt if I can do it, sir," he said, as we flashed along. But he was game, so was the pony, and, with a sprint that would have done credit to a Derby winner, we drew up at the station exactly to the minute.

I grabbed my suit-case, hurled myself out of the cart and made for the platform.

"London train gone?" I asked a porter.

He looked surprised at first, then pointed to a clock which said half-past nine.

"Summer time began yesterday," he observed laconically.



QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

CLERK AT EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE (wearily): Well, what's the matter with that last place?
DOMESTIC: I can't stay there. The missus wants me to sift the ashes!
CLERK: So they all do. You won't find a mistress who won't want you to sift the ashes.
DOMESTIC: No. But this one watches to see that I do it!

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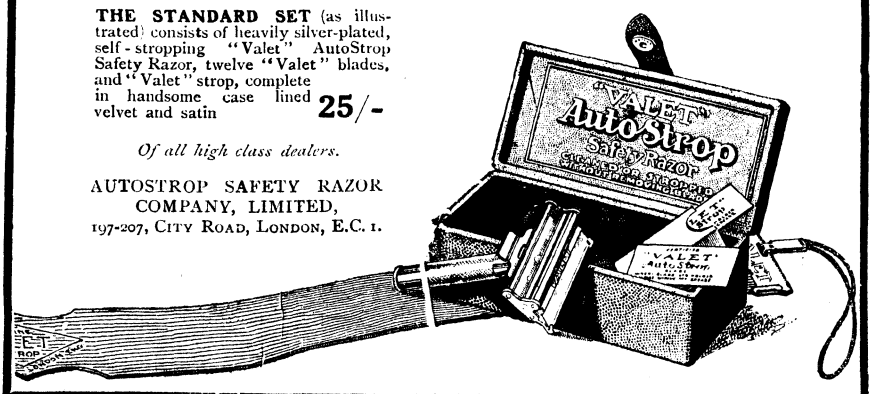
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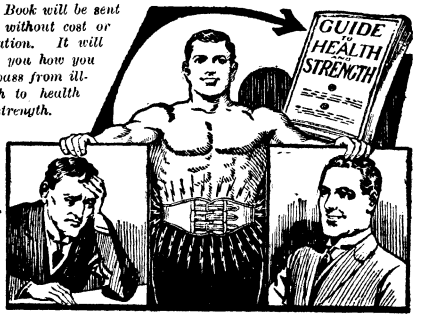
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—Food is undigested and not assimilated.
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—The blood becomes tainted with poisonous matter.
—There is in-nutrition or mal-nutrition.
—The brain is incapable of great or sustained effort.
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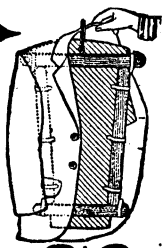
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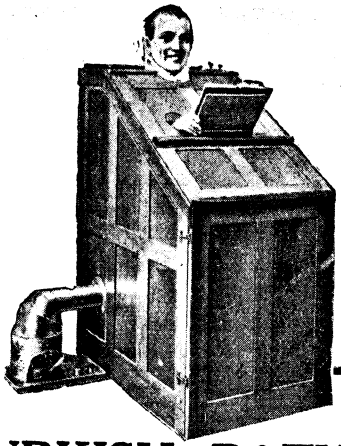
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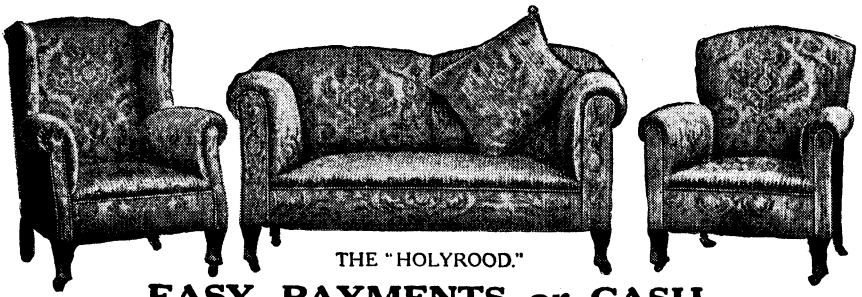
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Luxurious and soundly upholstered. Woollen Flocks. Coppered Steel Springs. British Webs. Seats, Backs and Arms all well sprung. Covered in a variety of French and other Tapestries. Patterns submitted for Customer's selection.

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Redecoration with HALL'S DISTEMPER is the order of the day.

Strip your walls of the dinginess born of the war years,—of the faded and germ-laden wallpapers.

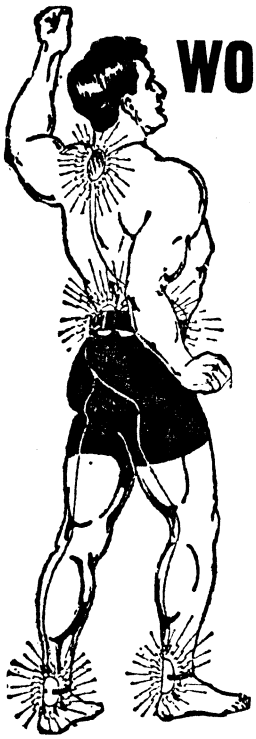
One application of Hall's Distemper instantly destroys all disease germs which collect on walls, and gives the pure atmosphere of perfect cleanliness to living rooms and bedrooms.

Hall's Distemper is made in a wide range of 60 pleasing and artistic colours, including rich dark tones as well as light delicate shades.

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10



THE WONDERFUL HUMAN MACHINE

If you had a real fine watch and some part of its mechanism broke, would you try to mend it by filling it with oil? No, you would take it to the best watchmaker you knew, and have him find the cause of the trouble, and repair it.

Your body is a far more delicate mechanism than any watch. It is the most complicated machine on earth, yet when some vital part breaks down or fails to work properly, you try to make it go by dosing yourself with poisonous drugs.

Your heart, stomach, liver and kidneys are run by a power called nerve force. Nerve force is just another name for electricity. When any of these organs break down or get out of order, sickness or disease results. Now, you can't cure the trouble until you remove the cause—repair the part that is broken. The only way to do this is to give Nature the power to do it. All you need is motive power—electricity. You can't get that from drugs. Our method is to restore this electricity, and pain and disease will disappear. That's Nature's way of curing.

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Advertisements for insertion in the June issue of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE should be received by April 29th, at latest.

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Anæmia, Lassitude, Palpitation, Nervousness.

This Tonic acts as a Nourishing Food to the Nervous System, and produces a fine healthy colour to the skin.

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DR. DAVIS'S book, most invaluable, sent free on receipt of a stamped addressed Envelope. Only address—

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MORE THAN 18,000 BRITISH DOCTORS HAVE TAKEN UP

CICFA

FOR

INDIGESTION

and HUNDREDS of these HAVE WRITTEN us of the SPLENDID RESULTS they have obtained by its use in PRACTICE and in their HOMES.

Physicians' names and addresses must never be published ; therefore, when a prominent physician wrote us recently doubting the accuracy of our statements, we invited him to call and examine the original letters and cards which we had received from those Physicians, assuring him that they would prove the correctness of our statements. He called, bringing a solicitor to assist him in thoroughly examining, and after they had made a full examination, he expressed his surprise, and declared that all his doubts were removed and he was entirely satisfied, because we had shown him absolute proof of the truthfulness of our every statement.

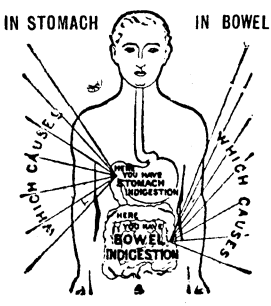
When so many British Doctors are so satisfied with Cicfa, you do not need a sample to prove its value to you. You can confidently commence taking it at once.

CICFA *restores* NATURAL DIGESTION in Stomach and Bowel, with steady disappearance of gases which often cause pressure and pain around the heart through Stomach Indigestion, also that feeling of weight at the pit of the Stomach a couple of hours after eating, through beginning Bowel Indigestion, gradual disappearance of Fermentation with Flatulence and Acidity, as well as gradual disappearance of those little hard masses called "Starch Balls" ; so that all the contents of the Bowel become digested, the nourishment absorbed into the system, and the Refuse naturally expelled. Gradually the natural functions of all the organs of digestion are restored, and by such assistance permanent improvement is secured.

INDIGESTION SYMPTOMS

IN STOMACH

GASES in STOMACH with eructations.
Sharp Neuralgic HEADACHES.
ACID in Stomach with HEARTBURN.
TONGUE coated white all over.
COMPLEXION blotchy, with redness of Nose.
EATING disliked. Some Nausea.
PAINS darting through Chest, Burning Spot behind left Shoulder Blade.



IN BOWEL

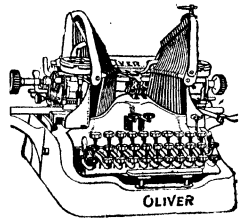
GASES in BOWEL or Flatulence.
Dull, Heavy HEADACHES.
ACIDITY, causing Gout and Rheumatism.
TONGUE coated Yellow at back.
COMPLEXION muddy or pasty.
EATING disliked or loathed. Biliousness and bad taste in mouth.
PAINS in Bowel, Griping and CONSTIPATION.

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Windsor Magazine, May, 1921.

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Test our Cloth Quality by writing for 100 CLOTH PATTERNS POST FREE

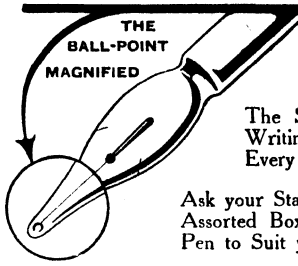
They're sent in neat box, together with book of styles by eminent London fashion artist, and simple clear instructions for self-measuring. Each cloth is also priced with the cost per yard. Any length cut.

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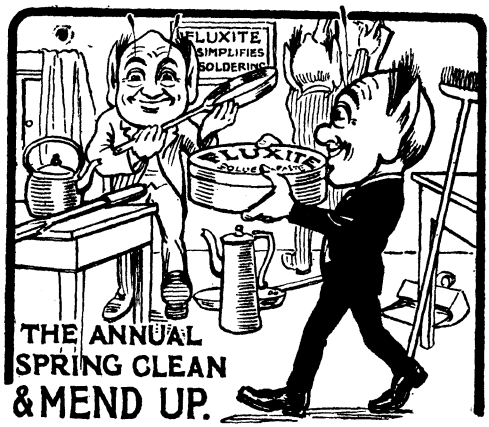


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Have you had any Egg and Cream de Luxe? That's a stunner: and Chocolate Toffee de Luxe is top-hole.

MACKINTOSH'S
NEW DISCOVERY
TOFFEE DE LUXE
DELICIOUS BEYOND DESCRIPTION

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FLUXITE in the home means that you can tackle all soldering jobs—leaking pipes, weeping kettles, pots and pans, "groggy" garden tools, etc.; and it's so easy with FLUXITE. No trouble, no wages, no waste of time—simply the job done, that's all.

As a matter of fact, all Mechanics will have

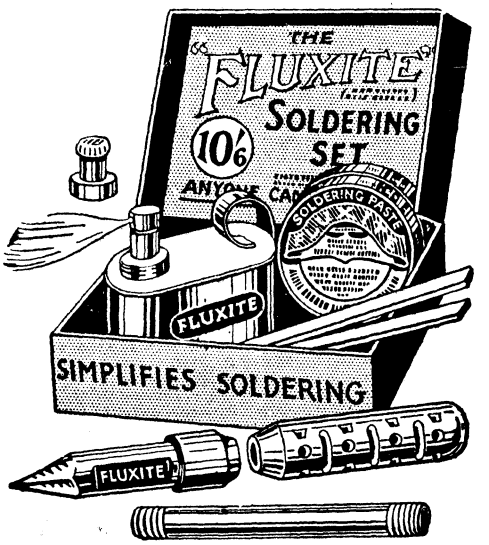
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Pelman Institute's Latest and Greatest Achievement.

IMMENSE interest has been aroused by the news that the well-known Pelman Institute has opened a special department for teaching Foreign Languages through the post, by a new and most effective method, in about one-third the time usually required.

Those who have enrolled for either the French or the Spanish Course are enthusiastic in their praise.

Although the Pelman Language Courses are written entirely in French and Spanish respectively, and do not contain a word of English, yet anyone can follow them with ease, even without previously knowing a single word of either of the Foreign Languages in question.

It sounds almost incredible, but it is perfectly true.

The first great advantage of the new Pelman method is that there is no Translation. You are not required to translate French or Spanish into English, nor English into French or Spanish. You learn French in French and Spanish in Spanish—the only scientific way. This enables you to speak these languages naturally and fluently, and without that hesitation (that stopping to translate mentally one language into another) which is almost unavoidable when a Foreign Language has been acquired in the old-fashioned way.

Secondly, the Pelman method enables you to learn French or Spanish without burdening your brain with the task of memorising, parrot fashion, long lists and vocabularies of French or Spanish words. You learn these words by using them, and in so natural a way that you never forget them.

Thirdly, those grammatical difficulties—those dull and complex rules and exceptions—which discourage so many people at the outset from learning Foreign Languages, are entirely avoided. By the Pelman method you learn first of all to speak, write and read French or Spanish, the formal grammar coming last of all.

A special feature of the Pelman method is the Guide to Pronunciation, which enables the student to acquire a correct accent without a master.

The straightforward simplicity of this new method; its novel, fascinating, and practical character; its ingenious system of teaching Pronunciation; the high reputation of the Pelman Institute that lies behind it; all have combined to win for it widespread interest and support. The number of people who are learning French or Spanish in this way is increasing daily. All state that it is the simplest and easiest method of learning French or Spanish they have ever met with. Readers who would like to know more about this remarkable method should write to-day to the address printed below, mentioning the language—French or Spanish—in which they are interested. By return they will receive, gratis and post free, a copy of the book containing full particulars of this method and showing how they can enrol. Write for a copy of this book to-day, to the Pelman Institute (Modern Languages Dept.), 55, Bloomsbury Mansions, Hart Street, London, W.C. 1.

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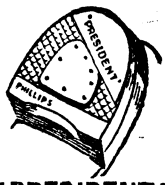
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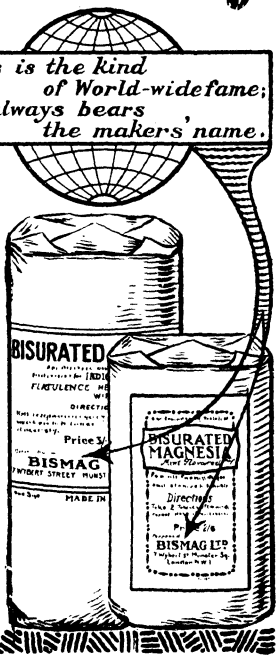


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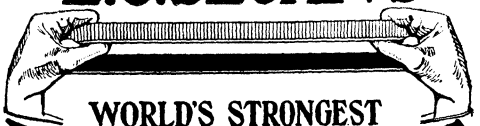
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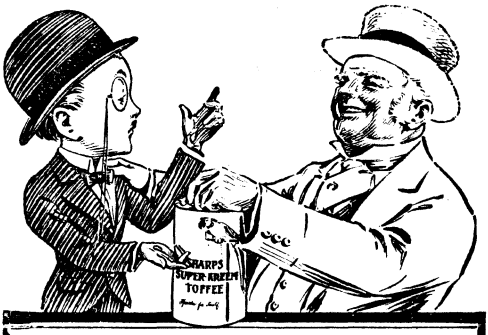
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RUBBER BANDS

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The Pen Corner **Kingsway, London, W.C.2.**



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JOHN BULL knows a good thing when he tastes it. That is why SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE has taken first place in the heart of the nation. Its universal popularity has been *won* by out-and-out superiority—there never was and never will be a sweet to equal it for flavour, for purity and for thorough wholesomeness. Think of somebody you would specially like to please—then buy him, or her, something that is sure to give delight—a tin of SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM—you will see it in any confectioner's window.

8D. *Sold loose by weight or in 4-lb. decorated tins—also in ¼, ½ and 1-lb. tins.*

Per ¼-lb. *If unobtainable in your district kindly send postcard, giving name of your confectioner.*

E. SHARP & SONS, LTD., MAIDSTONE.
The largest Manufacturers of Toffee in the World.

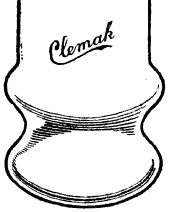
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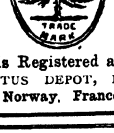
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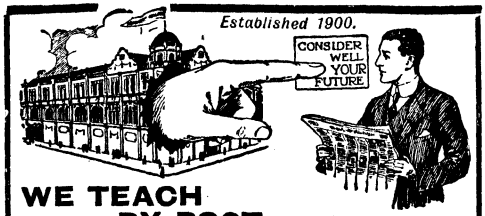
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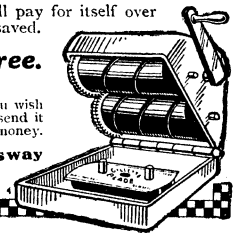
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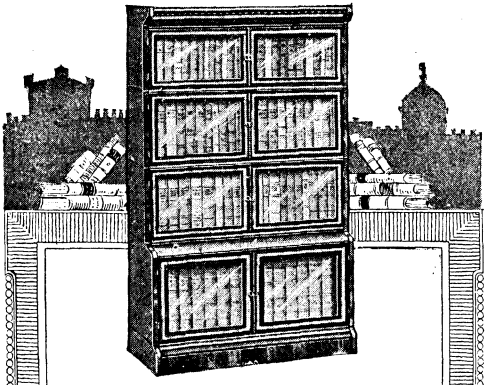
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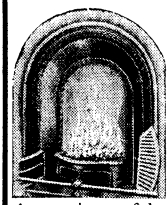
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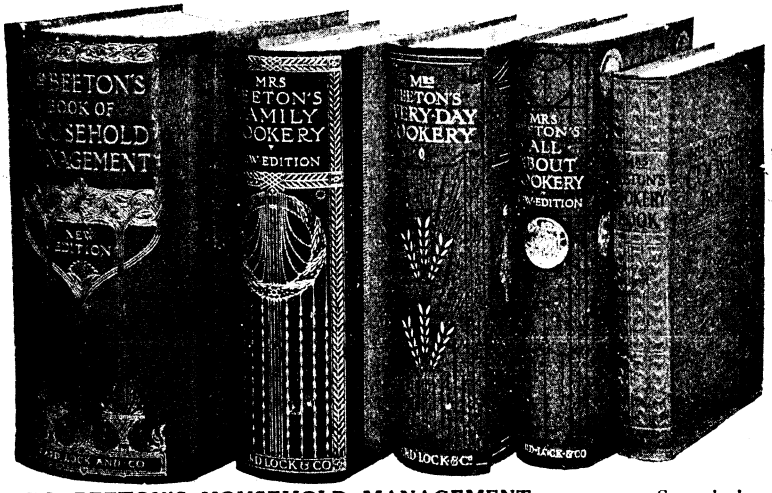
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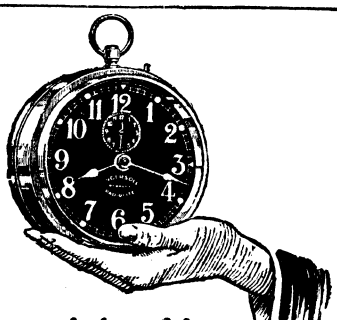
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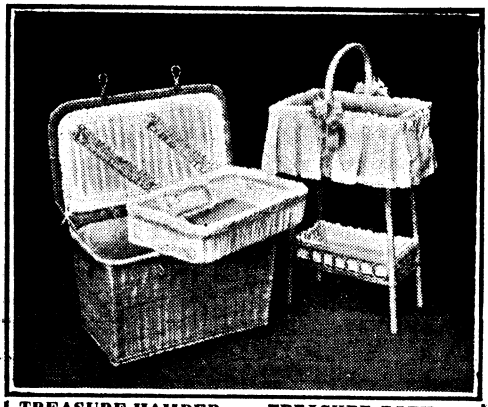
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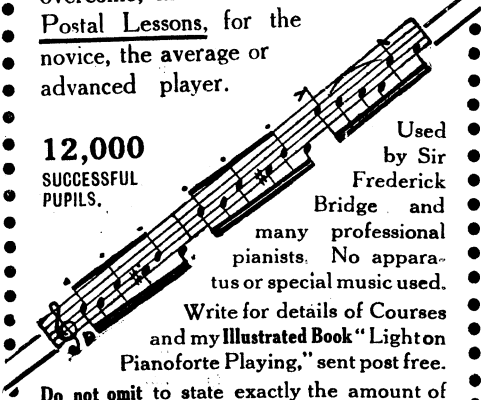
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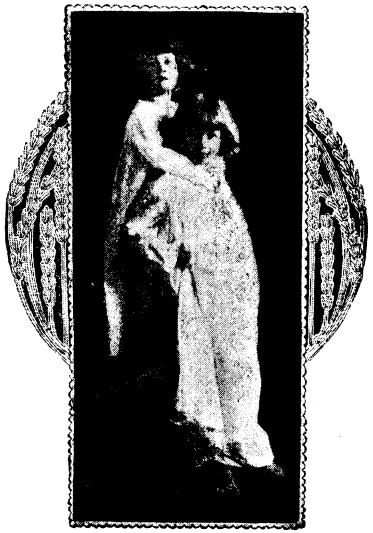
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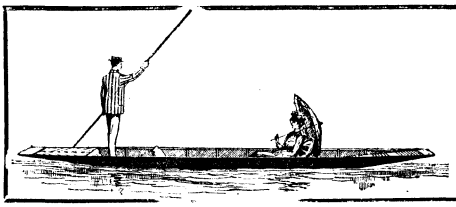
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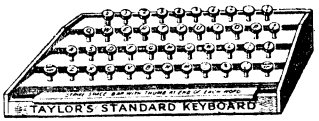
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